Indian sketches : taken during an expedition to the Pawnee tribes : in two volumes

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INDIAN SKETCHES,

TAKEN

DURING AN EXPEDITION

TO THE

PAWNEE TRIBES.

BY

JOHN T. IRVING, JR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA AND BLANCHARD.

1835.

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Entered, June 15th, 1835, according to Act of Congress, by JOHN T. IRVING, JR., in the office of the Clerk of the Southern District of New York.

ERRATA.

Page 79, line 2, for *settler* read *sutler*.
" 86, " 17, for *wilted* read *withered*.
" 151, " 13, for *around* read *round*.
" 174, " 22, for *wirey* read *wiry*.
" 224, " 4, for *gave* read *gives*.

18695*

TO

HENRY L. ELLSWORTH, Esq.

Dear Sir:

Having accompanied you, throughout the whole of your bold and perilous expedition to the Pawnee Towns, permit me to congratulate you upon its success, and upon the benefits secured both to your own countrymen, and to the wild tribes beyond the border, by your enterprize and self-devotion.

With me it was the juvenile excursion of a minor, when every thing was fraught with novelty and pleasurable excitement; but with you it was an official undertaking, full of anxiety and forethought, and I cannot but fear that, to the cares

of your office, was occasionally added solicitude for the safety of your young and heedless fellow traveller.

As it was partly at your own suggestion that the following pages were written, I beg you will accept this dedication of them, as a slight testimonial of my respect and esteem, and an acknowledgment of the kindness manifested by you throughout our wild campaign. If they present but imperfect sketches of the vivid scenes we have witnessed together, you will recollect that they are the first attempts of an inexperienced pencil.

THE AUTHOR.

INDIAN SKETCHES.

INTRODUCTION.

Introductory account of the object of the Expedition; and the persons who composed it.

For several years past the government of the United States, as is well known, has been engaged in removing the Indian tribes, resident within the States, to tracts of wild but fertile land, situated beyond the verge of white population. Some of the tribes thus removed, however, when they came to hunt over the lands assigned them, encountered fierce opposition from the aboriginal tribes of the prairies, who claimed the country as their own, and de-

nied the right of the United States to make the transfer. The migratory tribes were thus placed in a disastrous predicament: having sold their native lands to the United States, they had no place to which they might retreat; while they could only maintain a footing in their new homes, by incessant fighting.

The government of the United States hastened to put an end to the bloody conflicts thus engendered, by purchasing the contested lands, and effecting treaties of peace, between the jarring tribes. In some instances, however, the aboriginals remained unappeased. This especially was the case, with a fierce and numerous tribe of Pawnees, inhabiting the banks of the Platte river, and who were backed in their hostilities by their allies the Otoes, who, though less numerous, were even more daring than themselves. These two tribes laid claim to all the land lying be-

tween the Platte and Kanzas rivers; a region comprising several hundred square miles. It had long been their favourite hunting ground, in which it was death for a strange hunter to intrude. This forbidden tract, however, had been granted by the United States to the Delawares; and the latter had made it the scene of their hunting excursions. A bitter feud was the consequence. The tract in question became a debateable ground in which war parties were continually lurking. The Delawares had been attacked, while hunting, by the Pawnees, and many of their tribe had fallen. The Delawares, in revenge, had surprised and burnt one of the Pawnee towns, while the warriors were absent on a buffalo hunt.

The hostile feelings thus awakened among the aboriginal tribes of the Prairies, had been manifested toward the white men. Several trappers and traders, had

been massacred by the Pawnees, who looked upon them as intruders, and who were too far from the settlements; too confident of their own prowess, and too ignorant of the power of the whites, to care much either for their friendship or their enmity.

In this state of things, the commissioners appointed by government to superintend the settlement of the migratory tribes, were instructed to proceed to the region in question; purchase the contested lands of the Pawnees, and induce them to remove to the north of the river Platte, and effect a treaty of peace between them and their new neighbours. For this purpose, in the summer of 1833, Mr. Ellsworth, the same commissioner who in the preceding year had explored a tract of the hunting grounds between the Arkansas and the Grand Canadian,* set out from

* See a Tour on the Prairies by W. Irving.

Washington for Fort Leavenworth, a frontier post on the Missouri river, about forty miles beyond the boundary line of the State of Missouri, where he was to await the arrival of one of his fellow commissioners, before proceeding to visit the hostile tribes. In this expedition he was accompanied by the writer of the following pages, who was glad of the opportunity to visit strange scenes and strange people, of which he had only heard wild and exaggerated rumours. There was another volunteer, a Scotch gentleman, travelling for information and amusement; and a son of the commissioner, (Mr. Edward Ellsworth,) who acted as secretary to the expedition, made up our party.

At St. Louis we hired two servants to accompany us throughout the expedition. One was a half breed, a cross between the Creek Indian and the negro; he was named Mordecai, and inherited the lazy propen-

sities of both races, but entertained a high opinion of his own merits. The other was a tall awkward boy, with a low forehead, and a dull sleepy countenance, nearly hidden by elf locks. His name was Joseph. He spoke a mixture of French and English, and would fain have passed for a full blooded white, but his mother was a thorough squaw, wife to a little creole Frenchman named Antoine or Tonish, who had accompanied the commissioner on the preceding year, in his expedition to the Arkansas frontier.* Joseph inherited from his father a gasconading spirit, and an inveterate habit of lying. Like him, too, he was a first rate horseman, and a hard rider, who knocked up every horse entrusted to him. To add to his hereditary qualities, he inherited from his mother, an inveterate habit of stealing. Though a down-

* See Tour on the Prairies.

right coward, he boasted much of his valour, and even told me in confidence, "that he could lick his daddy." Being of an obstinate disposition, he was wisely appointed by the commissioner to drive a dearborn wagon, drawn by two mules; and many a stubborn contest took place between him and his fellow brutes, in which he was sure to carry the day.

Such was our party when we left St. Louis, on our route to Fort Leavenworth.

CHAPTER I.

The Indian Country.

It was late upon a fine glowing afternoon in July, that we first crossed the Indian frontier and issued from the forest, upon a beautiful prairie, spreading out as far as the eye could reach, an undulating carpet of green, enamelled with a thousand flowers, and lighted up by the golden rays of the setting sun. Occasionally a grouse, frightened at our approach, would bustle from among the high grass and fly whirring over the tops of the neighboring hills.

We had ridden for more than an hour over the green waste. The heat of the afternoon was yielding to the cool breezes of sunset; the sun itself, had just hid

its crimson disk below the prairie hills, and the western sky was still glowing with its beams.

The deer, which during the scorching heat of mid-day, had nestled among the thick groves which dot the prairie, now began to steal from their hiding places, and were seen bounding over the green sward, or standing buried up to their heads among the tall flowers, and gazing wildly and fearfully at our party.

At a distance, too, we could perceive the gaunt form of a vagabond wolf, sneaking through the grass, and stealing snake-like upon his beautiful, though timid co-tenant of the prairie.

An exclamation from our guide attracted our attention to a solitary Indian, mounted upon a horse, and standing, statue like, upon a distant hill directly in our route.

Although we had often seen straggling

Indians, in the frontier towns, they had in general so degraded an air as to attract but little attention. The appearance of this one, however, standing alone, on his own soil, where he was bowed by no feeling of inferiority, must, we thought, be as noble as the soil of which he was the master; and we pushed forward to gaze upon him. He remained unmoved, neither advancing a single pace to meet us, nor retiring on our approach. He proved to be a Shawnee; one of the remnant of that brave tribe, who under Tecumseh had made such a desperate attack upon the whites near the banks of the Wabash.

Some years since, they had been removed from their old hunting grounds and stationed about ten miles beyond the boundary which separates the state of Missouri from the territory bearing the same name. They had left the graves of their fathers, the home of their childhood, to seek in a

strange land, that freedom which they could no longer enjoy in the homestead handed down to them by their unfettered ancestors; but not before the sapping influence of their communion with the whites had exerted its sway over them, and reduced them to that abject state which distinguishes the civilized from the savage Indian.

A feeling of disappointment, mingled with sorrow, came over us as we rode up to this solitary being. At a distance our fancies had painted him possessed of all that was noble in the Indian character; but a nearer view dispelled the illusion. He could not have been older than thirty, but intemperance had left its mark upon his features. His hair was thick and matted, and hung nearly to his eyes. His legs were covered with leggings of deerskin, ornamented with a yellow binding. Over a dirty calico shirt he wore a long surtout

coat, with immense brass buttons; and upon his shoulder he bore a very long and heavy rifle.

He saluted us with the usual guttural salutation of "ugh!" and turning round rode slowly ahead of our party. His horse was one of those tough little Indian ponies celebrated for hard heads, hard mouths, hard constitutions, and a fund of obstinacy which it would puzzle Satan himself to overcome. He wriggled through the grass with a sideling ricketty pace, that would have wearied any other than an Indian, and between the incessant drumming of the heels of the rider into the ribs of his steed, and the jerking, hitching pace of the animal, I could not well determine which underwent the most labour, the horse or his master.

He had not ridden in front of us long, before we saw at a distance, another of the same class galloping towards us. He came

forward over the prairie at the full speed of a lean raw-boned nag; and we hoped to find in him a character which might redeem the first, but in this we were disappointed.

He was short and broad; dressed in a dirty calico shirt, and an equally dirty and ragged pair of pantaloons. On his head was cocked with a very knowing air, a something, which once might have been called a hat. On his shoulder he carried a long rifle, while he plied its wiping rod lustily upon the flanks of his horse until he reached the party.

After gazing at us with some curiosity, he rode off to our first acquaintance. A short conversation then took place, after which they thumped their heels into the ribs of their horses and scampered off over the prairie, rising at one moment over the top of some ridge, and then again disappearing in the hollow which lay beyond it,

until at last we lost sight of them behind a grove which jutted out into the prairie.

So,—these are the Indians! This is a specimen of the princely race which once peopled the wilds of America, from the silent wilderness which still borders the Pacific, to the now humming shores of the Atlantic! We were disappointed and did not reflect that we were looking only upon the dregs of that people; that these were but members of those tribes who had long lived in constant intercourse with the whites, imbibing all their vices, without gaining a single redeeming virtue; and that the wild savage could no more be compared with his civilized brother, than the wild, untamed steed of his own prairie, could be brought in comparison with the drooping, broken-spirited drudge horse, who toils away a life of bondage, beneath the scourge of a master.

Upon their departure we urged our

horses forward, for the creaking of the prairie insects warned us of the approach of night, and the place of our destination was yet some miles distant. A rapid and silent ride of an hour brought us to the wished for spot.

It was a single log cabin, built in the edge of the wood, and inhabited by a white man, the blacksmith appointed by the United States to take charge of, and keep in repair the arms paid as an annuity to the Shawnee tribe; a measure of government highly pleasing to the Indians, who detest labour of all kinds, and would willingly travel a hundred miles to get another to perform some trivial job, which they might themselves accomplish with but a few hours labour.

The house of the blacksmith bore all the marks which characterize the backwoodsman. It consisted of two small cabins, formed of rough unbarked logs, and united

to each other by a covered shed. One or two heavy vehicles were standing in front of it. At about a hundred yards distance was a large field of Indian corn. Two cows, two horses, and a cozy bevy of pigs, who were snuffing and grunting from a deep mud-hole a few yards from the house, made up the live stock of the establishment, and were all that were considered necessary for the comfort of a backwoodsman.

CHAPTER II.

The Rangers—Indian Habits—Crossing the Kanzas River.

It was daylight on the following morning when we commenced our journey towards Cantonment Leavenworth. It is situated in the Indian country, about forty miles beyond the line which separates the State from the Territory of Missouri. Our guide took the lead, and struck into a narrow foot-path which led through the forest, while the rest of us followed in Indian file.

There is a deep silence in a western wilderness. No sound is heard, not even the note of a bird to break the deathly stillness.

Occasionally a spectre-like raven would flit across our path, saluting us with his ill-omened croak; or poising himself upon his wings, to take a more minute survey of the strange beings who had invaded his secluded haunts.

The silence was thrilling. Our voices echoed beneath the leafy canopy with a sound that rendered them strange even to our own ears. Even the crackling of the dry twigs as they snapped beneath the hoofs of our horses, had a strange and solemn sound; but as we grew familiarized with it, this feeling wore off; nor was it long, before the jest and merry laugh went on as usual; and I imagine many a long day had passed since those aged forests had rung to such sounds of boisterous merriment as burst from the lips of the band, as we galloped towards the prairie, which lay but a few miles beyond.

In half an hour we reached it. A loud whoop from our guide announced that something more than usual had met his eye. At the same time he struck his spurs into his horse and galloped out into the open prairie.

At a short distance, a long troop of horsemen was trailing through the high grass, and preparing to enter a small thicket of timber which rose in the prairie at a short distance. They were a body of the United States Rangers, and had just returned from escorting the Santa Fe traders across a portion of the perilous route, which they are obliged to take, in carrying on their profitable, though hazardous trade with that inland mart. When we met, they had been more than a month absent from the garrison, seeing none but their own party, or occasionally a straggling band of friendly Indians, carrying their whole wardrobe in the small valise

attached to their saddles; dependant for subsistence on hunting alone, and contiually on the look out for an enemy; an enemy that always came when least expected; tarried but to strike the blow, and retreated with equal celerity to the fastnesses of their own mountains.

There is always a feeling of vagabond companionship engendered by travelling in the wilderness; and although we were not a day's ride beyond the settlements, we hailed the sight of this tatterdemalion band with as much joy as if we had been united by the links of a long and well tried friendship.

We spent half an hour with them; then spurring on, we soon reached the bank of the Kanzas river.

This is one of the largest tributaries of the Missouri; being from a quarter to two miles in width, and varying in depth from one to thirty feet.

Upon reaching its brink, we found attached to a tree, a large scow which was used as a ferry boat. Its owner, a tall thin Delaware, was quietly seated in one corner, pouring out a flood of smoke from a small pipe which garnished one corner of his mouth.

There is always an air of gentlemanly laziness hanging about the Indians. They live they know not how, and they care not where. A little suffices them; if they can get it they are satisfied, if not, they are satisfied without it. They belong to a sect of philosophers ranging between the Epicureans and the Stoics. When pleasure presents its cup, they drink it to the dregs, and when the reverse is the case, they bear it without a murmur.

They have no objection to beg; or if it is equally convenient, to steal, for to tell the truth, they are much troubled with confused memories, and are terribly given to

mistaking the property of other people for their own. It is a universal practice among them, and brings with it no disgrace. To all this is added a most gentlemanly abhorrence of labour of all descriptions, and a great store of patience in enduring the pinching hunger which is often the result of indolence. On a wet day you may travel for miles over the prairies, or through the thickets, and not a single Indian will cross your path; but let the sun again beam forth, and you will see them around in every direction, lounging in the long grass or sunning themselves upon some high prairie peak; with a most profound forgetfulness of the past, and lordly contempt for the future; for they are marvellously fond of fulfilling the general sense, though not the literal meaning of the old adage which says, "make hay while the sun shines."

Upon our hailing this Charon of the

Kanzas, he quietly rose from his seat, and stepping to the shore, made signs for us to lead our horses into the scow. He remained upon the bank until they were all safely embarked. He did not offer to aid in the least, in getting them on board; nor did our guide appear to expect any assistance from him. When every thing was in readiness, he loosed the fastening, and seizing a long pole, thrust it into the sandy bottom, and whirled the ticklish vessel far out into the rushing current of the river. The water, at this spot, was not very deep; and by means of his pole, he soon ran the scow upon the sand of the opposite shore. He then secured it to a tree, and having received his pay, pocketed it, and strolled off, leaving the party to land, or stay on board, as they might think fit.

We disembarked and galloped up the bank. On the top was a large log house, inhabited by the blacksmith of the Dela-

ware Indians, and the last building we were to meet in the route to the garrison. We had scarcely reached it when the woods on the opposite bank of the river began to ring to the shouts of the Rangers; and the whole troop, as fantastically arrayed as a band of Italian banditti, slowly wound among the tall tree trunks, until they reached the bank which overhung the water.

There was a pause of some moments upon the brink; then a heavy splash announced that the foremost had taken to the water; and in a moment after, his powerful animal was struggling against the swift current. The rest paused to watch his progress, then one after another dashed in; until the long line of snorting steeds, and their whooping riders, extended nearly across the river.

At that moment a dark thunder cloud, which had been hanging over the woods

for several hours, opened its fire upon the band, thoroughly drenching all that the water had left untouched, and rendering them almost invisible by reason of the density of its shower.

The cloud hovered over for about an hour, but at last, one after another, a few rays were seen shooting out their bright lines from behind the dark curtain, and playing upon the tops of the distant trees. Finally the ragged masses rolling together slowly floated off to the eastward, until their dark forms were lost below the horizon, and the heaven was left in its sea of pure and spotless blue.

CHAPTER III.

Shawanese and the Delawares.

In an hour, we had left the house of the blacksmith, and were dashing through the moist and glistening grass of the prairie, in front of one of the villages of the Shawanese. It consisted of about a dozen houses or cabins, grouped together upon the top of a hill, and looking up a ragged little prairie. There was but little attraction in its appearance, and withal a most philosophic indifference to cleanliness or comfort.

Our approach was announced by about twenty half starved dogs, who set up a yell which brought to the doors every inhabi-

tant of the place, old enough to be tormented with curiosity.

Presently two of them came forward to meet us. The first was a fat wheezing Indian of about fifty. He was dressed partly after the fashion of the whites, and partly in his own native style. He wore a broad brimmed black hat, ornamented with several bands of tin; a pair of large black rimmed spectacles; a blue calico shirt, and a pair of blue cloth pantaloons, secured close to his legs by several bands of yellow riband.

His companion, who was a little herring of a fellow, retained more of the Indian in his dress and appearance. His head was shaved, with the exception of a single lock* which luxuriated upon the top of his

* It is customary with all the Indian tribes, when shaving their heads, (as is the almost universal practice with the uncivilized tribes) to leave a single,

crown, surrounded by a little pallisado of stiff bristles, left standing at its root, amid the general harvest. His face and head had been painted with vermilion, and at a distance bore a strong resemblance to a large red potato. A shirt of calico was the only article of civilized manufacture about him. His leggings were of deerskin, the edges of which were cut into a rough border: and his mocassins were made of the same material.

Upon our approach, they came out with the intention of holding a conversation with us, but owing to an equal ignorance of the language of each other, we

long, thin lock of hair upon the crown, to aid their enemies in removing their scalp. From this it received the appellation of "scalp lock." It is considered a point of chivalry among them, to leave this unshorn. Great care is frequently bestowed upon it, and it is usually adorned with plumes of the eagle, the feathers of birds, or ornaments of deer's hair.

could obtain from them but little information. After wasting a short time in attempting to glean intelligence of our future route, we gave it up, and started forward at random. We rode up hills and down hollows; spattered through streams; galloped over patches of prairie, and through clumps of woodland, until, after riding for more than an hour, we found ourselves in the edge of a wood, and in the very heart of a town of the Delawares.

A general barking of dogs, again announced us to the Indians. They flocked out to meet us. From them we learned our route, and passing through the village continued our journey towards the cantonment.

There is but little in the civilized Indian to excite interest, or to enlist the feelings; they are a race between the whites, and their own people as God made them.

We have heard tales of those from whom they sprung; of their wars; of their contests for their soil; of their fierce and bloody defence of their villages, and of the graves of their ancestors. But where are they? Where are the braves of the nation? They have come within the blighting influence of the white man. They have been swept away, even as is the grass of their own prairie before the fire of the hunter. A spring may come, again to revive the drooping face of nature; but to them there is no spring, no renovation. It is probable, that ere two centuries shall elapse, there will be but a very remnant of their race; a few wretched beings, lingering about the then abodes of civilization, unheeded, unnoticed; strangers in the land of their fathers.

We paused for a short time, in the edge of the forest, to take a lingering look of

the village; then turning away, we pursued our course until our horses again brought us to the prairie, upon which was imprinted the wide trail leading to Leavenworth.

CHAPTER VI.

The Prairie.—Arrival at Fort Leavenworth.

The passing cloud which had swept over the prairie in the morning, had left nothing but beauty. A cool freshness exhaled from the tall grass glittering with its water beads. The rich, though parched foliage seemed to have given place to a young and luxuriant growth of the richest green. The clusters of flowers which had worn a dried and feverish look, now rose in renovated beauty, as if from their bed of sickness, and spread their perfumes through the morning air.

In the spring of the year, these prairies are covered with a profusion of pale pink

flowers, rearing their delicate stalks among the rough blades of the wild grass. These were too fragile to withstand the scorching heat of summer; they had disappeared, and their stalks had also withered. Others had succeeded them. There was a gorgeous richness in the summer apparel of the prairie. Flowers of red, yellow, purple and crimson, were scattered in profusion among the grass, sometimes growing singly, and at others spreading out in beds of several acres in extent. Like many beauties in real life, they make up in the glare of their colours, what they want in delicacy; they dazzle but at a distance, and will not bear closer scrutiny.

There is a sensation of wild pleasure, in traversing these vast and boundless wastes. At one moment we were standing upon the crest of some wavelike hill, which commanded a wide view of the green desert before us. Here and there, were small

clumps of trees, resting, like islands, upon the bosom of this sea of grass. Far off, a long waving line of timber winding like a serpent over the country, marked the course of some hidden stream. But a hundred steps of our horses carried us from the point of look-out. Passing down the sides of the hill, we splashed through the water at the bottom; tore a path through the grass, which frequently rose, in these hollows, to the height of eight or ten feet, and the next moment stood upon the crest of a hill similar to the first. This was again cut off as we descended a second time into the trough which followed the long surge-like swell of land.

Such is the prairie—hill follows hill, and hollow succeeds hollow, with the same regularity as the sweeping billows of the ocean. Occasionally a high broken bluff rears its solitary head in the midst, like some lonely sentinel overlooking the coun-

try. Upon the tops of these we frequently saw an Indian, standing in bold relief against the sky, or seated upon some pleasant spot on its summit, and basking in the sunshine, with that air of lazy enjoyment which characterizes the race.

Hour after hour passed on; the prospect was still the same. At last a loud cry from our guide announced that we had come in sight of the cantonment.

There was a snowy speck resting upon the distant green; behind it rose a forest of lofty timber which shadowed the Missouri. This was Leavenworth. But still, many miles intervened; for the prairie is like the ocean—the view is wide and boundless; and it requires an eye trained by many months residence in these regions, to measure accurately the distance of objects.

It was mid day when we first caught sight of Leavenworth, but it was near sun-

set before we arrived there. About a dozen white-washed cottage-looking houses, compose the barracks and the abodes of the officers. They are so arranged as to form the three sides of a hollow square; the fourth is open, and looks out into a wide but broken prairie. It is a rural looking spot—a speck of civilization dropped in the heart of a wilderness. There was nothing here to tell a tale of war; and but for the solitary sentinels upon their posts; the lounging forms of the soldiers, who were nearly worn out with their labours to *kill time;* or the occasional roll of the drum, as the signal for the performance of some military duty, we would not have known that we were in the heart of a military station.

CHAPTER V.

The Sac Indian.

On the following day we strolled through the forest which skirted the garrison and overhung the Missouri. At one moment our eyes would be caught by the dazzling plumage of the little parroquets, as they whirled through the branches of the trees; at another we amused ourselves by listening to the shrill screams of a woodpecker, as he saluted some crony mounted on a neighbouring limb.

Our attention at other times would be attracted by the movements of some old antiquarian bird of the same species, who was busy peeping into the holes and crannies of some ruined trunk—to ascertain if possible the cause of its decay.

In another direction might be seen a solitary raven, sitting in silence upon the naked limb of some mouldering tree, and apparently brooding over the ruin that reigned around him.

As we passed an opening between the houses, which gave us a view of the green in front, we caught sight of a single Indian, standing beneath the shade of a tall oak.

Whilst we were regarding him, a little red-nosed soldier came up. He informed us that the Indian was a Sac, one of those who had fought against the whites under Black Hawk. As he mentioned this, he took the opportunity of uncorking his indignation, and letting off the superfluous foam, in a volley of oaths and anathemas against the whole race in general, and this individual in particular. He threw out dark hints of what he had himself done in the war, and what he would *now* do, if the

major would only permit it. At the time we looked upon him with considerable awe; but we afterwards learned that there was little to be apprehended from him. He was a character notorious for boiling over in the excess of his wrath, especially in time of peace; but beyond this was distinguished for nothing, except a strong attachment to liquors of all descriptions.

We soon left him, and crossed over the green, to the spot where the Indian was standing.

I had formed but a poor opinion of the race from those whom I had already seen, but never was I more agreeably disappointed—never had I beheld such a princely fellow. He stood unmoved as we came up, viewing us with a calm, cold, but unwavering gaze. His eyelid never drooped; nor was the eye averted for an instant as it met our look. A large blanket, here and there streaked with vermilion, and

ornamented with hawks bells, was so disposed around his folded arms, that it left bare his finely formed shoulder and half of his high and sinewy chest. A bright, steel headed tomahawk peeped from beneath its folds, and a quiver of arrows hung at his back. His legs were cased in leggings of dressed deer skin, with the edges cut into a rough fringe. He wore a pair of mocassins of dressed buffalo hide. The top of his head was closely shaven, and covered with vermilion; but his face was free from any colouring whatever, with the exception of a ring of black paint, which was carefully drawn around each eye.

As we approached he drew himself up, and threw his head slightly backward with an air of haughtiness which well became his high stern features. He seemed to feel like a proud but desolate being. Upon his head was bound an eagle's plume, but

it was crushed and broken. Could it be emblematic of the broken spirit of his own tribe? Their power was gone; their strength was withered; they were scattered to the four winds of heaven; the bones of their bravest warriors were whitening the prairies, and their chief was in bondage in an unknown land.*

And this savage—he seemed to feel that he was alone; but his stern features told that he asked no pity, and would brook no insult.

For some time he stood in front of us returning gaze for gaze, and for a moment a smile played over his features; then drawing up his tinkling blanket, he wrapped it closely around him, and walked off. We lost sight of him behind one of the

* At this time, Black Hawk was in the Eastern States.

buildings, as he directed his course towards the forest.

We turned away towards our quarters, but the roll of the dinner drum sounded across the green, and changing our course we obeyed its summons.

CHAPTER VI.

The Konzas.

We had been two days in the garrison. A loud shrill cry arose in the air as we were in the desolate chamber which we called "our quarters." Before we had time to pass a remark as to its cause, it came again, echoing through the building, and causing the forest to ring to its sound. We knew that it proceeded from Indians, and immediately left the quarters to see them. They were at a little distance from the fence surrounding the garrison, grouped together under a large oak tree, which grew alone, upon a small level plot of ground directly in front of the quarters. They were wanderers from the

Konza village, which is situated upon the Konza river, about a hundred miles beyond the line of the Indian boundary.

There were about forty of them, crowded together around a small fire, which they had kindled under the shade of the tree.

Give an Indian a fire, and you give him a home. Be there one, or a hundred, a few sticks thrown together and kindled into a flame, will be the gathering place of all. It is the same in the prairies, and in the settlements; in warm weather, and in cold. When they stop from a journey or a hunt, they kindle a fire and nestle around it. From that moment they feel an ideal property in the spot upon which they have thus intimated their intention to linger.

The band before us were all finely formed men; for with the exception of the Osage Indians of the Arkansaw, they are considered the most noble of the tribes

which yet roam within the neighbourhood of the settlements. As yet from their communion with the whites they have derived benefit alone. Too far from them to imbibe their vices, they have yet been able to hold sufficient intercourse to promote their own interest. They have thrown aside their buffalo skin robes, and adopted the blanket. They have become skilful in the use of the rifle, and except in hunting the buffalo, make no use of bows and arrows.

When we came up, two or three were engaged in collecting fuel to sustain the fire; the rest were lounging around, luxuriating in the most perfect laziness. Several were leaning listlessly upon their hunting spears, too indolent to bear even their own weight. Some were resting against the tree; and a band of five or six were lying upon their backs, with their feet to the fire, drumming with their fists upon

their breasts, and chanting out a sleepy ditty, the chorus of which was filled up by a loud yell from every throat in the band.

They were all athletic and finely formed. Their heads were shaven with the exception of the scalp lock, which hung down between their shoulders; and their breasts were left exposed by their blankets.

There was a little squaw in company with them, a notable character, and if I might judge from the foolish look of several, and the loud laugh of the rest, gifted with a most peppery tongue. We had heard of Indian beauties, but she was not one of them, for she engrossed in her own person a concentration of ugliness, which would have more than satisfied a dozen ordinary females. There was an acidity in her black glittering eye which gave a zest to her remarks, causing them to be highly relished by the lounging crew, but rendering them unpalatable to the un-

fortunate scape goat at whose expense they were uttered.

We had not stood there long, before we came in for our share of her blessings. Of their nature, however, we remained in a happy ignorance. They were received with loud bursts of merriment from the graceless troop around her, with the exception of one or two of the oldest Indians. The grave faces, and wrinkled brows of these, wore a discouraging sternness. It was in vain that the little woman exhausted her wit, for the purpose of enticing a smile upon their features; their lips were as rigid as ever, nor did the relaxation of a single muscle of their swarthy faces denote that they participated in the general amusement. In spite of this, however, she appeared loath to relinquish her sport. While this had been going on, an old Indian was sitting close to the fire, with one elbow resting upon his knee, and his hand sup-

porting his chin. His hair was white, and rested in flaky locks upon his shoulders. His eyes were fixed intently upon the blaze, and he was apparently buried in deep thought.

He had continued in this posture for some time; but at last a loud burst of laughter, which followed some remark of the squaw, seemed to call him to himself. He looked around for a moment, with a bewildered air; then starting to his feet, strode over to the oratrix, and hissed a few low, but stern words, in her ear. Her face lengthened, and her mouth closed. The rest instantly followed her example, and the faces of the whole gang were converted to a look of the most penitential gravity. What the charm was, that acted so potently in hushing the clamour of the virago I never knew, or I should have imparted it for the benefit of the civilized world.

The old man then stepped from the centre of the crowd and extended his hand to each of us. After a cordial shaking he pressed his own against his bosom, and withdrew to his former seat at the fire. From that moment the noise and jeering were hushed. The old lady turned her attention to a number of potatoes which were roasting in the fire. Parties of five or six, wrapping their blankets closely around them, sauntered off towards the quarters of the officers. Others strolled off to the banks of the Missouri; and five or six who appeared too idle even to do that, laid themselves at full length upon the grass, and joined in the drum and chorus of those who were already engaged in chanting. A few of the oldest warriors then drew together in a knot, and commenced an earnest debate, in which they were afterwards joined by the old Indian who had interfered at first in our behalf

They spoke earnestly; the matter appeared to be one of moment, and each in turn gave his opinion. There was a warmth and an energy in their tones and gesticulation as they spoke, and an earnestness in their usually calm and dispassionate features, which strongly excited our curiosity.

The little woman, too, seemed totally engrossed with the interest of the subject. She suffered a large potato to roast to coal without noticing it. She sat with her eyes intently fixed upon the varying countenances of the speakers; turning from one to the other, as each in turn delivered his opinion. Her air was not that of mere curiosity, there was a strong mixture of anxiety blended with it. She looked as if she were deeply interested in the result.

The debate continued for some time; but at length they separated, and apparently without coming to any conclusion,

strolled off towards the quarters without heeding the squaw, leaving her seated alone, at the fire.

We afterwards learned, that this party of Indians had been for two days without provisions, and that they were consulting about the selection of a committee from their band, who should commence begging for a supply among the soldiers of the garrison. We forgave the little squaw, in consideration of the penance and fasting which she had already undergone.

This band hung round the garrison for several days. The imposing appearance which they bear at first sight, wears off as you become familiarized with them. The high, haughty carriage which they wear towards strangers, gradually relaxes as they become acquainted. They were constantly lounging round the quarters of the soldiers, or strolling in little parties of five or six, through the woods.

Here and there, some curious fellows might be seen, peering into the windows of the dwelling houses, or stealing through some open door into the interior. Their step is so hushed and noiseless, that there is nothing to warn you of their approach. I have frequently been surprised, upon looking round in my chamber, to find a dozen of these fellows quietly seated around me, some upon chairs, others upon the floor, and all apparently as much at their ease as if they had made it their resting place for the last century. They seemed neither to care whether you welcomed them or not; they had made up their minds to visit you, and visit they would. With all this, there was an unobtrusiveness in their manners, which soon reconciled us to their presence. They would sit for hours, in the same attitude, making no remarks, holding no conversation, and were it not for their

glistening, snaky eyes, which were ever fastened on your face, creating a feeling of restless uneasiness, there was little else in their company to annoy you.

It was near the close of a warm afternoon, that I had thrown myself upon a bearskin on the floor, with that feeling of listless languor which is apt to pervade a stranger, when visiting the western country for the first time. The drum was pouring out a dull melancholy roll, at the far end of the green, occasionally enlivened by the shrill tones of a fierce little fife. Under the window, a lounging soldier, half asleep, was drawling out a tedious ditty, with a strong nasal accompaniment which did not add much to the vivacity of the tune. Even the sun himself had been wrought up into a fever. With a face as red as that of a fat butcher, he crawled through the sky, as if he longed for the time when he might

take his twelve hours nap in the cool bed of the ocean. The trees nodded over the bank of the Missouri with a heavy, sleepy look. The river itself scampered along its channel, as if anxious to escape from the sultry heat which filled the atmosphere.

I had lain nearly an hour upon my shaggy couch. My eyes were yielding to slumber; present things were fast vanishing, or only appeared blended with the fitful forms of a drowsy imagination.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" shouted a dozen voices at my side. I started up—a group of Konzas were seated in a ring, around my bearskin. For a moment I was bewildered—but they soon convinced me of the reality of my situation, and of the difference between their visitations, and those of fancy.

They were a detachment who had been sent out to forage in the larders of the

garrison. Although their language was unknown to me, their object was perfectly intelligible. They signified their wants with a clearness of gesticulation which could not be misunderstood, and the earnestness of which was, no doubt, enhanced by a keen appetite.

Seeing that there was no alternative, I called to our half-breed boy:

"Joseph!"

"Vat you vant?" sounded a voice from the dark cavern below, which was dignified with the name of a kitchen.

"Have you any meat or bread, for these Indians?"

"Sacre diable!" answered he. "Vare de devil I to git meat for dem? I h'aint eat none my own sef, for tree day, nor Mordecai neder."

This was not altogether true, but it was conclusive, so I returned to my dusky friends with the heavy intelligence.

There are two characters in this world, whom it is impossible to convince of the truth of anything which jars with their own opinions or interests; the first is a politician, the second is a hungry Indian. I soon found it out—my red visiters were immoveable—they were deaf both to arguments and to statements of facts. They heard me—they understood me—but they were not a whit nearer to conviction, and they made no motion to depart. There was no resource left, so I determined to abdicate in their favour, and taking up my hat I left the house, and strolled off in the woods.

It was near sun set when I returned to my quarters. I opened the door of the chamber and looked in.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" sounded a dozen guttural voices from within. My red friends were there still, waiting for my coming. I closed the door instantly, and walked off

with a hasty step to the quarters of one of the officers, nor did I return until late at night, when I found that they had disappeared.

I afterwards learned that they had been supplied with provisions, on the morning previous, and that they were now carrying on the business of begging, for mere amusement.

When the night grew dark, there was a bright fire gleaming under the old oak tree where they had taken their station, and the whole group were huddled together around it. From the piazza in front of our quarters we could see their forms flitting round the blaze, and could hear their song as it rose up in the damp air, with a wildness not unmixed with melody. The day was past, and they were now enjoying the present moment with their usual happy forgetfulness of toil. In the morning we again visited the

spot which they had selected for their camp; but it was deserted. The embers had fallen to ashes—the fire was extinguished—and the whole wild troop had again set out upon its wanderings.

CHAPTER VII.

The Konza Chief.

Two days after the departure of the Konza band we were seated in our chamber, when a heavy muffled tread jarred upon the piazza in front of us. A large Indian passed the window, and a moment after he entered the room.

He was tall and muscular, though his form through neglect of exercise, was fast verging towards corpulency. He wore a hat after the fashion of the whites, a calico hunting shirt and rough leggings. Over the whole was wrapped a heavy blanket. His face was unpainted, and although his age was nearly seventy his hair was raven black, and his eye as keen as a hawk's. He

was the White Plume, chief of the Konza nation. He had spent much time among the whites, and had gradually become familiarized with their manners. Upon entering the room he lifted his hat from his head and placed it upon the table; then advancing towards the Indian commissioner, who was seated near the door, he offered his hand to him; after which he shook hands in turn with the rest. Having done this, he stepped into the centre of the room, and wrapping his blanket closely around his body beneath his arms, commenced an address—not that he had any thing in particular to say, for he had come to the garrison by accident; but he was one of those windy characters, who take great delight in listening to their own speeches, and who, unfortunately for the ears of many a civilized man, are not confined to savages alone. By his side stood his interpreter, a white man, who had

spent many years among the tribe, and who translated the sentences, as the chief paused for that purpose.

The address lasted for about ten minutes, by which time he was completely out of breath, and seated himself from mere exhaustion. The most of it was dull and a mere repetition of the same ideas; but once in speaking of the loss of his children, who had died of the cholera during the fall previous, his language was even poetical.

"My children," said he, "have gone from me. The Great Spirit has called them. They have disappeared like the snow that melteth on the prairie. I was lonely; I returned to my lodge, but it was desolate, for they were not there."

When he had rested himself for a few moments, he rose up; and after throwing out several hints of so broad a character that they smacked strongly of beggary,

he received several presents and left the building, winding his way over the prairie, along the narrow trail which led to his village.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Forest.—The Kickapoos.

Day after day waned by, still we lingered in the white-washed cottages of Leavenworth. Urgent preparations were making for our departure to the western wilds, but as yet they were unfinished. To the commissioner who had charge of the expedition, every moment was fraught with interest and anxiety, but to several of us who had accompanied him from curiosity alone, there was but little occupation. Still, there was a feeling of dreamy pleasure in wandering through the tall moss-grown groves which surrounded the garrison. There was a calm quiet pervading them, which stole soothingly over

the mind, drawing it away from dwelling upon things present, and wrapping it up in its own wild musings. The thick arches of overhanging trees, threw a dark and night-like shade over the ground. Here and there a solitary ray of sunshine, like a pilgrim in a strange land, strayed through some crevice in the thick foliage, playing in a bright hazy streak through the gloom, and casting a golden spot upon the dark creeping plants beneath. There was a vastness in the size of the mighty trunks, that seized forcibly upon the imagination. What was America when those veteran trees were but saplings? Who were her children? Where are they? The tale is a sad one, and fraught with little that reflects credit upon the white man.

The forest is full of ruins. It gives many a touching memento of the work of time. Hundreds of gigantic trees which

have weathered the storms of ages, and for centuries have kept their silent watch, have yielded to its power; have been hurled from their stands, and their lumbering wrecks are decaying upon the ground—the green moss is their covering, the wild ivy their shroud. Thousands of dead trees are still standing, shooting up their tall gray forms, stripped of bark, of foliage, and of branches; still, they cling with a lingering tenacity to their old abiding places, as if loath to resign themselves to the ruin which is every where reigning around them, and although despoiled of foliage, as if they still loved to linger on the spot which once bore witness to their magnificence.

Occasionally in our rambles we would fall upon a solitary Indian, roaming through the woods, or seated in deep meditation upon the wreck of some prostrate tree. It was the place for him. Let him look

upon the forests and read his own fate; they are united—their destinies are the same; alike they have lived and flourished in the wildness of nature, and alike they are disappearing before the approach of civilization. Let the Indian grieve at the sound of the woodman's axe, for at the fall of every tree, the hour of his own ruin draws nearer.

From the time of our arrival at the garrison, small parties of Indians had been constantly coming and going. They belonged to the Kickapoo tribe, another band of emigrants from the states. There were many manly forms among them, and some of their females were even beautiful. Scarce a day elapsed that we did not catch a glimpse of the gaudily dressed figures of some band, their tin trinkets glistening in the sunbeams, and their bright garments fluttering in the wind, as they galloped over the prairie towards the

garrison. They carry on a species of traffic with the settler at the post; exchanging furs and skins for ribands, and such other showy articles as are likely to catch the eye of a savage. This tribe, from long intercourse with the inhabitants of the settlements, have become accustomed to driving bargains, and are looked upon by the generality of traders as pretty hard customers; yet even from them, the profits derived by the whites are great.

From seeing these different bands constantly coming and going, to and from their village, we conceived a desire to visit them; and accordingly, upon a fine clear morning we started.

The path was for the most part through the woods. We rode about an hour, crossed several brooks, traversed several small patches of prairie, and at last found ourselves upon the summit of a high bluff which overlooked the little Indian town,

and commanded a fine view of the whole neighbouring country. At our feet lay a small green prairie, dotted with clusters of wild flowers. Three of its sides were enclosed by a ridge of hills, at the foot of which meandered a clear, sparkling brook, brawling in low murmurs over its rocky bottom. A long range of trees stood upon its borders, leaning over the stream, and shading its waters from the noontide sun. The fourth side of the green was hemmed in by a dark thick forest, which extended back to the banks of the Missouri.

In the edge of this stood the village of the Kickapoos. It fronted upon the variegated green. It was a retired, rural spot, shut out from the world, and looked as if it might have been free from its cares also.

As we stood upon the bluff, a small party of inhabitants from the village moved

towards a tree growing alone in the prairie, about a quarter of a mile from the town, and collected together beneath its shade. Presently, two young Indians made their appearance, mounted on horseback. Suspecting that there was to be a race of some description, we left the bluff, dashed through the brook at the bottom of the hill, and in a few moments were under the tree where the group had assembled. They received us in their usual calm manner, and we were satisfied; for the welcome of an Indian is shown more by actions than words. There is no superfluous expression of feelings which he never had—he never makes use of hypocrisy—he receives you with a good will, or not at all.

By the time we reached the spot, the preparations were finished. A little, hard headed, old Indian was appointed umpire, and the two riders were at their posts.

They were both young men, dressed in hunting shirts and cloth leggings. Their horses were not of the class, that might strictly be denominated racers. One was black, the other cream colored. The black one had fierce little eyes glittering like fire, beneath a long shaggy forelock, which reached nearly to his nose. The eyes of the other were water coloured, and had a sneaking slyness about them—an air which seemed to insinuate that their owner "knew a thing or two." Both horses were round bodied, bull necked, and the thick legs of both were garnished with fetlocks of matted hair, extending from the knee joint down to the hoof, and trailing on the ground as they walked. There was not much show of spirit about them. They appeared but little ambitious of distinguishing themselves in the coming contest, and if their own inclinations had been consulted, it is

probable would have declined it altogether. Not so their riders; they sat as eager as grey hounds in the leash. Their eyes were intently fixed upon the umpire, who seemed to take the matter with wonderful coolness. At last he gave the signal—there was a hard, quick thumping of heels, against the ribs of the horses—the next moment they had vanished from their posts. There was a great clattering over the hard course—their bounds were short but rapid. At last the legs grew invisible, and the bodies looked like two balls, moving through the air. The riders whooped and screamed, and the band of lookers-on shouted as loud as either.

The little cream coloured pony was working wonderfully hard, but the black was gaining ground. There was a tree at some distance, which they were to pass round, and return to the starting place. They reached it—the black taking the

lead by a length—his legs were invisible as he turned, but the cream coloured pony pushed him hard. They now approached the goal.

"Two to one on the black!" shouted one of the whites.

"Lay it on, old boy, or you're beaten!" halloed another.

Both riders exerted themselves to the utmost. They flew over the ground like lightning. The black still kept the lead, but both horses seemed to be eaten up with fury, at being driven at such a rate. They rushed snorting in—the crowd shouted, and opened a passage for them—they dashed through, running nearly a hundred yards beyond the mark, before they could check their speed. The black pony had won, but he appeared too angry to enjoy his victory. I looked at the other. *There* he stood—*there* was that self-satisfied, water coloured eye, which said, "I may

have been beaten, but still I know a thing or two."

When the race was finished, we rode on and entered the town. About thirty huts constructed of bark, compose the village. It is impossible to describe their architecture, for no two were built alike, and as far as I was able to judge, they had no particular shape. A strong gale of wind would have prostrated even the best of them, had it not been for the shelter of the forest in which they were built.

As we rode along, the troops of naked children who followed at our heels, convinced us, that among the sundry and manifold cares of the world, this tribe had not forgotten to perpetuate their race, and notwithstanding their laziness, had contrived to start a fresh growth of pappooses, that constituted the "rising generation," and were then undergoing the education, usual to the Indian child. From

what we saw, there is little doubt, that when the present race shall pass away, the rising tribe will be fully qualified to inherit in a creditable manner, the laziness of their forefathers.

Here and there, winding through the woods, or strolling over the prairie, might be seen a couple of cooing, greasy lovers; full of affection and slovenliness; unwashed, but devoted. What a fund of affection there must have been to have overlooked such a world of defects. A loud cry broke out in one of the hovels, and a couple rushed out. The first was a fat blowzy squaw. After her followed a diminutive, spider-legged Indian, who looked as if he had wilted away under the gall of his own disposition. He was the lord and master of the lady. In his hand he flourished a stick, with which he had been maintaining that discipline, by some deemed proper in a family, and which he

now seemed inclined to continue. The woman, however, escaped, and made for the woods. The bystanders paused for a moment to look on, for there was an agreeable excitement about this, which did not occur every day, and which therefore was not to be lost. Upon the escape of his wife, the little man looked around, as if he longed for some other object, upon which to vent the remainder of his wrath; but finding none, he disconsolately entered his dwelling.

In the centre of the town is a small log house, the residence of the agent, appointed by the United States to reside with the tribe, and attend to the payment of the annuities forwarded by the government to this nation. We were cordially welcomed by him. We found the chief and prophet of the tribe with him. The former was a corpulent man, and in his youth must have been peculiarly hand-

some. The prophet was a tall bony Indian, with a keen black eye, and a face beaming with intelligence. He was leaning upon the muzzle of a long rifle when we entered. This he laid aside, and with the assistance of an interpreter, commenced a conversation with us. It was something unusual for him, as he generally kept aloof from intercourse with the whites. He had been converted to Christianity, and on Sundays delivered addresses upon this subject, to the tribe.

There is an energy of character about him, which gives much weight to his words, and has created for him an influence greater than that of any Indian in the town. From the little that we saw it was evident that the chief yielded to him, and listened to his remarks with the deference of one who acknowledged his superiority. There was however no appearance of jealousy or heart burning between them.

It was late in the afternoon before we left. The sun was fast sinking in the west, and his last beams were resting on the tree tops, as we rode out of the woods. One hour's ride, brought us again to our quarters at the cantonment.

CHAPTER IX.

Departure for the Pawnees—Prairie Life.

Several weeks had elapsed, since our arrival at the garrison; yet the other commissioner had not made his appearance. Mr. Ellsworth determined therefore, to set out without him, for the Pawnee villages. The state of the garrison, enfeebled by sickness, did not allow of a sufficient escort to overawe the savages. He therefore took the bold alternative of throwing himself among them, in a manner unarmed, piquing their honour and hospitality by this mark of confidence.

Seven soldiers constituted the whole of the military escort: merely sufficient to protect us from any petty, prowling band.

The two servants, Mordecai and Joseph, who had hitherto accompanied us, were to have charge of the two light wagons—in which were packed our bedding, baggage and camp furniture. We had also engaged the service of a negro as cook.

Our own mess was increased by the addition of Major Dougherty from St. Louis, the agent for the Pawnee Indians, and Dr. May, a surgeon resident in Missouri.

On the morning previous to the day of departure, the soldiers commenced loading two heavy ox wagons, with kegs of gunpowder; barrels of flour; sacks of bacon; tents and cooking utensils, besides boxes and bales, containing presents for the Indians. Towards evening, a cessation of swearing in the neighbourhood of the storehouse, gave token that the task was accomplished. In the course of an hour, half a dozen oxen were yoked before each wagon, and conducted by two wild teamsters.

They departed under escort of the seven soldiers. The whole were to encamp on a small stream a few miles distant, and await our coming. Our party, six in number, were to follow their trail, on horse back on the succeeding morning.

The sun rose cheerily over the tops of the trees, on the day following, and we prepared to leave. There was quite an excitement in the garrison. Kind wishes and farewells were exchanged. Many who had been anxious to join the troop, in their journey through this unknown land, now hung round with longing eyes. There was a mystery and shadowy danger, which threw a high excitement around the whole expedition. Nothing was positive about the wild tribes we were to visit. It was known, that their numbers were large; it was reported, that they were cruel and unsparing in their nature; that they look-

ed upon the whites as their bitterest enemies, and carried on a war of extermination against the whole race. By way of adding to the agreeable excitement, two or three, had collected all the tales of murder and bloodshed, committed by the Indians since the discovery of America, and poured them into our ears, with a most edifying accompaniment of long faces and evil prophecies. They foretold that we would never again be seen at Leavenworth, or at all events, that if we did, it would be stripped of our scalps. They thought, as these were the most desirable trophies, perhaps the Indians would have the generosity to permit our return, provided we left them behind. These, and many other predictions of an equally comforting nature, were conveyed to us, by a number who buzzed around as we were getting ready. They, however, at last took their leave, not for-

getting to give us the rather unnecessary caution, to "take care and not get killed."

It was near mid-day when we set out. Our little cavalcade clattered over the hard walks until we reached the road. Galloping over the prairie, we at length came upon the broad trail left by the heavy baggage wagons, as they had passed through the high grass.

A number of the officers accompanied us several miles, but at length they took their leave, and left us to journey onward in our pilgrimage. As long as we were in the garrison, where the busy face of man was seen, where active forms were moving around us, and the every day concerns of life were going forward, we felt that though distant from home, we were still connected with society; but when we had started on our journey, and bade farewell to those who had accompanied us; as

we watched their forms until they were hid by the distant hills, we felt that the last link was broken, which had hitherto united us to the world and its occupations.

It was intended, first to strike up in a northerly direction, until we reached the village of the Otoe and Missouria Indians, situated upon the Platte river, about twenty miles north-west of its junction with the Missouri. Thence the Platte was to be our guide, until we came upon the Pawnee towns. They are seated on its banks, some five or six days' journey further to the westward.

During our stay at the garrison a change had come over the face of nature. The bright and luxurious summer flowers had disappeared, a growth of yellow and blue, the harbingers of the departing year, supplied their places. Here and there might be seen a single red flower, the survivor

of those which had flourished in the summer, shooting up its head amid clusters of golden hued blossoms, still lingering, though a stranger among them. The deep richness of foliage, which graced the trees, had departed, and the brown tinge of autumn was creeping among the leaves. The bright soft green was disappearing from the prairie grass, giving place to a colour of greenish brown. The geese and pelicans had left their lives of solitude, and forming themselves into large flocks, were winging their way to the north; the wind swept over the rustling grass with a moaning sound that spoke strongly of the approach of winter.

At this season we commenced our travel. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the spot where the soldiers had encamped. It was on the side of a small prairie hill. Within a few yards of their tents, a scanty run of water stole

through the grass, and at the distance of about a hundred yards stood a grove of timber, which supplied the fuel necessary for their night fires.

There is but little variety on the prairie. The life of one day is the life of a month; yet there is an excitement about it. The killing of a deer is an era in the day. The appearance of a hunter upon a distant hill, would give birth to a thousand speculations, as to his success in the chase. The sight of a deer standing upon an eminence, or reclining in some hollow, was a signal for bustle. There was an intense interest excited, in watching the movements of the hunters, as they stole down upon him; as they drew near every eye was fixed, even the breath was restrained: the animal scents them in the tainted air; the hunters crouch in the tall grass and creep onward—the deer rises to his feet; his nose is raised high in the air; he begins

to walk off. Now is the time! Crack!—sounds the rifle. In five minutes he is far beyond sight, or two hunters are staggering beneath his weight, as they bring him to the camp.

The sight of foot prints in the grass, would be the foundation of a hundred wild fancies. By whom were they made? by members of what tribe? were they friends or foes? where were they going? was it a war party or a hunting party? These and a hundred other conjectures would be offered, by a knot collected around the suspicious mark, denoting that others besides ourselves had passed in that direction, and that we were not the only beings wandering upon that waste.

CHAPTER X.

The Party of Sac Indians.

We had been absent about a week, from the garrison, and had traversed nearly a hundred miles of prairie and woodland. Our encampment during the night previous, had been upon the borders of a small prairie rivulet, which meandered through the country, overhung by a fringe of bushes and trees. Several times during the day previous, foot prints had been observed in the grass; and the whole party were on the look out for Indians. At night, lest the horses should stray from the camp, and be driven off by lurking marauders, they had been secured by long ropes to stakes. The night, however, pass-

ed without disturbance; and in the morning the tents were struck, and the party resumed its journey.

As the movements of the wagons were necessarily tardy, four of us strolled forward on foot. We were several miles in advance of the party. We travelled slowly that they might overtake us, amusing ourselves by discharging our rifles at the ravens or vultures which soared above our heads. Sometimes we diverged a little from our path, to get a shot at the deer, which we now and then, saw standing at a little distance, gazing with surprise at our appearance.

We were out of sight of the wagons. In front of us, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, rose a swelling, cone-like hill. From each side of it extended a long ridge, effectually shutting out the view beyond. Presently a black object rose over its top. Gradually it grew lar-

ger and larger, until the tall, stately form of an Indian appeared, and stood watching our movements. A moment after, another joined him; he was followed by a third, who took his stand by the side of his comrades. For some moments there appeared to be a consultation among them, then seating themselves they waited for us to come up. The position which they had taken was directly upon the narrow trail we were following, so that whether friends or foes, there was no possibility of avoiding them. But as there were only three, there was little to be apprehended. Before advancing, however, the soldiers took the precaution to hammer their flints, and renew the priming of their guns. While thus engaged, one of them named Wolf, a tall, gigantic fellow, with a neck like a bull's, who had fought against Black Hawk, took the opportunity to bestow

a little of his advice and opinion upon the others, and turning round he commenced:

"You see them ar Ingens; well, them is Sacs and Foxes. I know 'em, for I *fit* agin 'em when Black Hawk led 'em on. And now I think on't: it's dreadful aggravating to see how the folks at the east'ard are honouring that ar rascal for killing and murdering the whites, while we who *fit* agin him to prevent it, a'int taken no notice on; its monstrous aggravating. But that a'int nothing to the *pint*. You see them ar Ingens on that ar hill. Now you think there's only three on 'em. There you think a lie—bekase there's more behind 'em;—for if there wa'rnt they would come on to meet us, and would'nt be squatting like so many woodchucks in the *parara*. They'm waiting for the rest to come up, to see whether they think it best

to rob us or not. That's my opinion, and I know something of Ingen natur, for I *fit* agin 'em. Now I know one what they wont rob, and that's me; first, bekase I ai'nt got nothing to lose; and second, bekase I intend to make my yager* speak to the first red skin what tries to take it. And now my boys, move ahead—keep a stiff upper lip, and don't be in a hurry to use your *wepons*. If the worst comes to the worst, we can keep 'em off until the wagons come up, and then we'll lick 'em."

After finishing his address, he shouldered his yager and strode on, followed by the rest of us. Notwithstanding his knowledge of "Ingen natur," we did not place as much confidence in his experience as he might have supposed; nor did we ex-

* This is a short rifle, and carries a very large ball. They are used by the U. S. dragoons, on account of the convenience of their length.

pect to push matters to the extremity, which he seemed to take for granted, would be the result of our meeting. In five minutes we were at the bottom of the hill. The savages maintained their sitting posture on the summit, nor did they rise until we came within about ten yards of them. Upon reaching them we found that the soldier had been correct in one of his conjectures; for at the distance of little less than a quarter of a mile, were about seventy more of the same band, driving in front of them a large drove of horses. They were all wild, uncouth looking fellows. Some few were dressed in blankets, but the most of them in robes of buffalo skin. At the sight of us they raised a loud yell, and leaving their horses to the charge of one or two squaws, scampered over the prairie to meet us.

"I told you so," said Wolf. "Look to your guns, and when they crowds around,

keep a tight grip on the *wepons*, but don't fire till it comes to the pinch."

The crowd poured on towards us, each endeavouring to outrun his neighbour. Many threw from them the robes which impeded their motions, and several pulling them from their shoulders, packed them under their arms. Yet they appeared to be actuated by curiosity alone. But one of them had a gun; the rest were armed with bows and tomahawks. Upon reaching us, they pressed round, fingering our different articles of dress with much curiosity, though without any appearance of hostility towards the owners. At length they drew round in a closer crowd, and began to hustle us. Suddenly a tall, thin fellow grasped hold of Wolf's yager.

"No you don't, *stranger!*" shouted Wolf, jerking the gun from his grasp, with the look of a nettled bull. At the

same time he whirled the Indian off, with a violence that fairly made him spin, and nearly prostrated two others, whom he encountered in his involuntary movement. "Keep off, you red devils," said he, stepping back, "I wants none of your *neighbourship*." Seizing his gun by the muzzle, he whirled the breech around with a violence which caused the Indians to draw back, and cleared a small circle around him.

At this moment the chief, or person who seemed to have charge of the party, made his appearance. He spoke a few words to the band, which caused them to draw off; then walking his horse up to us, he cordially shook hands with all. He was an old man, dressed in Indian style, with the exception of a plaid handkerchief, tied round his head. Upon the top of this was mounted a broad brimmed black hat, shadowing a little, dried up, French-looking physiognomy. Agreeable as his

presence was at that moment, there was but little about him, to justify the high idea we had formed, of the leader of a wild band of savages; and there were many nobler men in his troop. As they stood in a large circle around us, I think I never beheld such a number of proud spirits, as were there. It seemed strange that they should all be at the command of such a miserable looking little leader.

While we were standing thus, a loud whoop from one, attracted the attention of the whole band. The next moment the unwieldy wagons came toiling along a ridge at a distance, followed by the light dearborns, and a train of four soldiers.

At this discovery the Indians broke away, scampered towards them, and in a short time were all clustering round the vehicles. They remained there about half an hour, and then resumed their journey along the prairie.

CHAPTER XI.

The Journey.—Saline River.

Another week had elapsed, but still we were on our journey. With the exception of the band of Sac and Fox Indians, we had met with no other savages. We were the only human beings, who lived and moved upon the wide waste. Nothing else was visible—not a deer, not a tree—all was prairie—a wide unbroken sea of green—where hollow succeeded hollow, and the long grass waved on the hills, with a heavy surge-like motion, until at last it was blended with the hazy atmosphere, which met the horizon. The power of sight was shut out by nothing; it had its full scope, and we gazed around until our

eyes ached with the very vastness of the view that lay before them. There was a degree of pain, of loneliness, in the scene. A tree would have been a companion, a friend. It would have taken away the very desolation which hung round us, and would have thrown an air of sociability, over the face of nature; but there were none. The annual fires which sweep over the whole face of the country, during the autumn of every year, effectually destroy any thing of the kind. There will be no forest, as long as the Indians possess these regions; for every year, when the season of hunting arrives, they set fire to the long dry grass. Once fairly on its errand, the destructive messenger speeds onward, licking up every blade and every bush; until some strip of timber, whose tall trees protect the shrubbery, by the dampness which they diffuse beneath; or some stream, stops it in its desolating path.

The object of burning the grass is to drive the deer and elk, that are roving over the broad extent of prairie, into the small groves of timber scattered over the surface. Once enclosed within these thickets, they fall an easy prey to the hunters.

We at last reached the Platte* river, about forty miles distant from the Otoe village; then striking off to the west, we followed the course of this powerful tributary of the Missouri.

* The Indian name for La Platte is *Nie-borah-ka*, signifying the shallow river; as also the word *Nieagaruh* signifies the broken river. This last word might lead to a pretty correct conclusion as to the meaning of the name Niagara, given to the celebrated river and falls connecting Lake Erie with Ontario; for the word is the same among several of the different tribes, who, though they now dwell in the "far west," may nevertheless have once roamed in the neighbourhood of our eastern waters.

On the first night, our little camp was placed upon a high bank of the Saline river, which flows through the prairie until it empties into the Platte. During the spring of every year moisture exudes from the soil near its source, covering the prairie for the distance of many miles. This is dried up by the heat of summer, and leaves in its place a thick incrustration of salt. This is in turn dissolved by every successive rain, and carried off into the Saline river, giving to its water the brackish taste, from which it has derived its name. There is a barrenness around the stream, contrasting strongly with the other rivers that grace the prairie. Around *them* is always a rich forest of the deepest, rankest green. Every thing marks the luxuriance of the soil, and the nourishment yielded by the streams, to the lofty trees, which hang like guardians over their waters.

But the Saline is far different. There are no groves to fringe its banks. Here and there, the huge, grey forms of a few dead trees, may be seen leaning with a melancholy grandeur over its surface, or lying prostrate in the river, while its waters gurgle with a mournful sound, around the branches of these fallen giants. There is a cheerless look about it. It winds its way through the prairie with a withering influence, blighting every green shrub; and seems to bear an ill will to all the bright beauties of creation.

I strayed some distance down the stream, pattering my rifle bullets on the water, to the great annoyance of several ducks who were quietly dozing upon its surface, and some sprawling old terrapins who were floating down the stream, enjoying an evening sail.

A loud hail from the camp, and the

voice of Mordecai announcing that supper was ready, recalled me to the spot. The roasted shoulder and ribs of a large buck were impaled upon a stake of dog-wood, planted in the ground in front of the mess. They had already commenced their meal, with knives of all sizes and descriptions, and the mass of meat disappeared like magic, before their reiterated attacks. Though at all times very well qualified to act a conspicuous part, in a warfare of that description, they were now more than usually fitted for the task, owing to their eating only two meals a day—one at sunrise and one at sunset—the rest of the time being occupied in journeying over the prairie. By the time that we finished, the sun had sunk in the west, and the stars were glimmering in the sky. Our party collected round the large fire of blazing

logs, and our guide having lighted his Indian pipe, related to us an Indian tale, of which the following is the purport.

"About forty miles above the spot where we are now encamped, lie the great salt plains, which cause the brackish taste of the Saline river. In one part of these plains, is a large rock of pure salt of dazzling whiteness, which is highly prized by the Indians, and to which is attached the following story."

CHAPTER XII.

The Legend of the Saline River.

MANY years since, long before the whites had extended their march beyond the banks of the Mississippi river, a tribe of Indians resided upon the Platte, near its junction with the Saline. Among these was one, the chief warrior of the nation, celebrated throughout all the neighbouring country, for his fierce and unsparing disposition. Not a hostile village within several hundred miles, but wailed for those who had fallen beneath his arm; not a brook, but had run red with the blood of his victims. He was forever engaged in plotting destruction to his enemies. He led his warriors from one village to another,

carrying death to the inhabitants, and desolation to their homes. He was a terror to old and young.

Often, alone and unattended, would he steal off, to bathe his hands in blood, and add new victims to the countless number of those whom he had already slain. But fearful as he was to the hostile tribes, he was equally dreaded by his own people. They gloried in him as their leader, but shrank from all fellowship with him. His lodge was deserted, and even in the midst of his own nation he was alone. Yet there was one being that clung to him, and loved him, in defiance of the sternness of his rugged nature. It was the daughter of the chief of the village; a beautiful girl, and graceful as one of the fawns of her own prairie.

Though she had many admirers, yet when the warrior declared his intention of asking her of her father, none dared come

in competition with so formidable a rival. She became his wife, and he loved her with all the fierce energy of his nature. It was a new feeling to him. It stole like a sunbeam, over the dark passions of his heart. His feelings gushed forth, to meet the warm affection of the only being that had ever loved him. Her sway over him was unbounded. He was as a tiger tamed. But this did not last long. She died; he buried her; he uttered no wail, he shed no tear. He returned to his lonely lodge, and forbade all entrance. No sound of grief was heard from it—all was silent as the tomb. The morning came, and with its earliest dawn he left the lodge. His body was covered with war paint, and he was fully armed as if for some expedition. His eye was the same, there was the same sullen fire that had ever shot from its deep sunk socket. There was no wavering of a single feature; there was not the shrink-

ing of a single muscle. He took no notice of those around him; but walked gloomily to the spot where his wife was buried. He paused for a moment over the grave—plucked a wild flower from among the grass, and cast it upon the upturned sod. Then turning on his heel, strode across the prairie.

After the lapse of a month he returned to his village, laden with the scalps of men, women, and children, which he hung in the smoke of his lodge. He tarried but a day among the tribe, and again set off, lonely as ever. A week elapsed, and he returned, bringing with him a large lump of white salt. In a few words he told his tale. He had travelled many miles over the prairie. The sun had set in the west, and the moon was just rising above the verge of the horizon. The Indian was weary, and threw himself on the grass. He had not slept long, when he was awa-

kened by the low wailing of a female. He started up, and at a little distance, by the light of the moon, beheld an old, decrepit hag, brandishing a tomahawk over the head of a young female, who was kneeling, imploring mercy.

The warrior wondered how two females could be at this spot, alone, and at that hour of the night; for there was no village within forty miles of the place. There could be no hunting party near, or he would have discovered it. He approached them; but they seemed unconscious of his presence. The young female finding her prayers unheeded, sprang up, and made a desperate attempt to get possession of the tomahawk. A furious struggle ensued, but the old woman was victorious. Twisting one hand in the long black hair of her victim, she raised the weapon in her other, and prepared to strike. The face of the young female was turned

to the light, and the warrior beheld with horror, the features of his deceased wife. In an instant he sprang forward, and his tomahawk was buried in the skull of the old squaw. But ere he had time to clasp the form of his wife, the ground opened, both sank from his sight, and on the spot appeared a rock of white salt. He had broken a piece from it, and brought it to his tribe.

This tradition is still current, among the different tribes of Indians frequenting that portion of the country. They also imagine, that the rock is still under custody of the old squaw, and that the only way to obtain a portion of it, is to attack her. For this reason, before attempting to collect salt, they beat the ground with clubs and tomahawks, and each blow, is considered as inflicted upon the person of the hag. The ceremony is continued, until they imagine she has been sufficiently

belaboured, to resign her treasure without opposition. This superstition, though privately ridiculed by the chiefs of the different tribes, is still practised by them, and most devoutly credited by the rabble.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Otoe Messengers.

On the afternoon following, a little before sunset, we encamped within ten miles of the Otoe village. Several times during the day, we had observed the heads of Indians, peering over the hills, but they had instantly disappeared upon being remarked, nor had an Indian ventured to approach. Our place of encampment was on a small knoll. At its foot, a meagre run of impure water was struggling through the grass, while a long line of tall, rank weeds marked its course, as it wound a passage along the different hollows. A solitary tree grew over a small puddle, which had formed in the prairie; and a

cluster of wild plum trees were knotted together around its trunk. With these exceptions, there was not a tree or a bush in sight.

At a little distance from us was the site of a deserted Indian village. It had been uninhabited for many years, and the stations where the lodges once stood, were overgrown with weeds and creeping vines. A short distance off, was the burial ground of the place, which evidently, had not been visited for many a year. The tall grass waved upon the large mounds, and the frightened prairie hen started up from the resting places of the dead.

We had scarcely encamped, and fixed up the largest tent, when the loud cry, "Indian ahead!" was bellowed out, by the stentorian lungs of one of the soldiers.

The savage was on a hill, about five hundred yards distant. He was mounted upon a small black horse; clothed

in a scarlet blanket, and in his hand held a long spear. He sat for some moments watching our movements; then thumping his heels into the sides of his horse, he dashed across a hollow that intervened, and galloped to the door of the tent. Here he sprang from the animal, and turning him loose, walked up to the guide. They were well acquainted; but his salutation was calm and cold; a slight smile played over his face, for a moment, as he recognised him, then all was quiet. His features were like stone; and whatever passions may have lurked within his bosom, his countenance was not the mirror that reflected them. He was attired in the wild garb of those Indians, who as yet have had but little intercourse with the whites. A pair of rough leggings were drawn over his legs, and a piece of blue cloth was secured around his hips. The

rest of his body was unclothed, unless the red blanket, which most of the time, lay on the ground at his feet, might have been considered part of his apparel.

The chief of the Otoe village had been apprised of our approach, and had sent this warrior to watch, lest we should come upon the town before it was prepared for our reception. He hung around the tent for some time, saying little; but we could see, that while his face was apparently turned towards the ground, his dark eyes were moving with restless activity in every direction, scanning every action of the party. He remained with us a short time; then having received a few presents for the chief, and one or two for himself, he caught the end of the buffalo tug, which though secured to the neck of his horse, was long enough to trail twenty feet after him in

the grass—and with a sudden jerk brought the animal to him, and sprang upon his back.

He had scarcely mounted, before another Indian appeared on an opposite hill, and galloped towards us. He exchanged a slight salutation with the first comer, and passing him, shook hands with the guide. There was more cordiality about him, than we had observed in the other, and his face wanted the cold reserve, which marked that of the first. Upon reaching the tent, he immediately signified his intention to remain during the night, and accordingly turned loose, the small white horse upon which he rode. Then lighting his pipe, he wrapped his blanket round him, and quietly seated himself near the fire—watching the cook, who was busily engaged in preparing supper.

The other, finding what was his intention, started off towards the village, and in a few moments was out of sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

An Otoe Warrior.—The Iotan Chief.

The whole prairie was glowing with the rays of the morning sun, when we started for the Otoe village. Our journey lay for the whole distance, along the borders of the Platte. It was a soft golden morning, and the water danced with a very air of happiness, sparkling and bubbling in silver and rainbow brightness, as it scudded along its broad channel. Its surface was studded with islands teeming with verdure, and tinted with all the various hues of autumn. The birds were piping out their matin hymns, and the fish were splashing sportively beneath their watery covering, sending a thousand silver

circlets eddying onward to the shore. The prairie grass was bending beneath the dew drops, which hung like strings of crystal upon their withering blades.

The heavy wagons were now kept closely together. The whole party, which during the first part of the journey had straggled widely apart, were collected. Our Otoe friend rode in front, accompanied by Major D——, the Indian agent. We had travelled for several miles, when we observed a single Indian galloping towards us on a large spotted horse. In a few moments he came up. He was one of the principal braves of the Otoe nation. He was completely naked with the exception of a small piece of cloth secured around his hips. His head was shaven, and to the scalp-lock was attached an ornament of deer's hair, resembling the crest of an ancient helmet. His whole person, head, face, and body, had

been covered with vermilion, until it was the colour of blood, and at a few yards distance, he looked as if he had been skinned alive. But notwithstanding his bloody appearance, his countenance, though calm and grave, had a mild expression not usually met with among the Indians. His whole demeanour was prepossessing, and when he spoke, his voice was like soft music. He was a favourite with most of the wild traders in that part of the country, on account of his generous character. If a stranger entered the village, he was the first to welcome him to his lodge, and to protect him from the insults of the meaner spirits of his nation. Yet even with this chivalrous nature, he was an Indian warrior, and an Indian warrior is little better than a murderer. He had counted as many scalps, as any of his nation; but those of hoary age, of the woman, and the child, were hanging in.

the smoke of his lodge, in companionship with those of the war worn warrior.

In an hour's time we arrived within a short distance of the village, though as yet it was hidden from our sight by a high bluff. Suddenly, a horseman dashed from behind it, and came towards us, plying his lash and urging his horse forward at a mad speed. The cry of "The Iotan!" burst from several who had before seen him; and in a few moments this redoubtable chief was by our side. He had evidently brought into service, the whole of his wardrobe, much of which he had received from the whites. His hair was long, and round it was bound a large piece of skin from the head of the grisly bear. Round his neck, hung a necklace of the claws of the same animal; and what was of more importance in his estimation, he was clothed in a long surtout coat, of blue cloth, adorned with red facings, and

enormously large brass buttons, and garnished upon each shoulder, with a pair of tarnished, sickly-looking silver epaulettes. From beneath the skirts of the coat, appeared two bare legs; and he wore a pair of coarse mocassins of buffalo hide.

There was a look of comic slyness, lurking around the eyes of this chief, united with an irascible twinkle, which bespoke a character habitually good natured, but prone to occasional gusts of passion. The most prominent feature of his face, however, had suffered mutilation. The end of his nose was wanting. I was curious to learn, whether this singular wound had been received in battle or private brawl—and my inquiries, made me acquainted with a curious tale of Indian revenge. There are a dozen different versions of the story, in circulation among the traders and trappers, but as far as I could ascertain, the following is the most correct.

CHAPTER XV.

The Iotan and his Brother—or Indian Revenge.

It was some years before the Iotan had reached the rank of a chief, that he was despoiled of his nose in the following manner:

Several Otoe Indians, by dint of paying fifty times their value, had become possessed of a number of kegs of whiskey. As this was rather a rarity, a council was called, and a general carousal of the male portion of the village resolved upon. The females were excluded: it being deemed necessary that they should remain sober, to exercise a conjugal care over their husbands, when so inebriated as to be unable to take care of themselves. In the mean-

time a person was appointed as guard, whose business it was, to keep watch over the liquor, and drive off all interlopers, who might be inclined to test its quality, before the time appointed. After three long, and to them lingering days, the time came round; and at the appointed hour not a soul was behindhand.

The signal was given; and the revel commenced. As the liquor began to work upon the passions of the revellers, they grew furious. They howled, yelled, and fought. The females fled from the building. All weapons had been removed beforehand; for they knew their own ungovernable nature, when under the influence of liquor, and therefore, had taken precautions, to prevent the occurrence of mischief.

But when the whiskey commenced its work; the savage was changed to a demon, and the lodge resounded with their

screams and howling; there was a hell within its bosom.

The giant warrior fixed his gripe upon the trembling frame of the aged; brother smote brother; friends fought with bitter fury, and the weak and decrepit were trampled under foot.

It was in this stage of the riot, that the Iotan and his brother had a furious scuffle. They grappled and rolled upon the ground. In the frenzy of strife and intoxication, his brother bit off the end of his nose, and instantly extricating himself, rushed out of the lodge.

The Iotan was perfectly sobered; he paused for a moment, looking intently in the fire, without uttering a word; then drawing his blanket over his head, walked out of the building and hid himself in his own lodge. On the following morning he sought his brother, and told him that he had disfigured him for life;

"to-night," said he, "I will go to my lodge and sleep; if I can forgive you when the sun rises, you are safe; if not, you die." He kept his word; he slept upon his purpose; but sleep brought not mercy. He sent word to his brother that he had resolved upon his death, that there was no further hope for him; at the same time he besought him to make no resistance, but to meet his fate as a warrior should.

His brother received the message and fled from the village. An Indian is untiring in his pursuit of revenge, and though years may elapse, yet he will obtain it in the end. From the time that it became the fixed purpose of the Iotan to slay his brother, his assiduity never slept; he hunted him for months. He pursued his trail over the prairies; he followed his track from one thicket to another; he traced him through the

friendly villages; but without success; for although he was untiring, his brother was watchful, and kept out of his way. The old warrior then changed his plan of action. He laid in wait for him in the forest, crouching like a tiger, in the paths which he thought he might frequent in hunting, but he was for a long time unsuccessful. At length, one day, while seated on a dead tree, he heard the crackling noise of a twig breaking beneath a cautious footstep. He instantly crouched behind the log and watched the opposite thicket. Presently an Indian emerged from it, and gazed cautiously around. The Iotan recognized his brother instantly. His careworn face and emaciated form, evinced the anxiety and privations that he had suffered. But this was nothing to the Iotan; as yet his revenge was unsated, and the miserable appearance of his bro-

ther touched no chord of his heart. He waited until he was within a few feet of him; then sprang from his lurking place and met him face to face. His brother was unarmed; but met his fiery look with calmness and without flinching.

"Ha! Ha! brother;" cried the Iotan, cocking his rifle, "I have followed you long, in vain,—now I have you—you must die."

The other made no reply; but throwing off his blanket, stepped before him, and presented his breast. The Iotan raised his rifle and shot him through the heart.

His revenge was gratified; but from that hour a change came over him. He became gloomy and morose; shunned the society of his fellow men, and roamed the woods, where he was nearly driven to

suicide by the workings of his feelings, and the phantasies of his brain. It was not until many years had elapsed, that he recovered from the deep anguish, caused by this unnatural act of vengeance.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Reception.—The Town.

It was many years after this savage deed that the Iotan was appointed chief of the Otoe tribe, and his after conduct fully justified the choice of the nation. To an ingenious skill in devising and planning war parties, he added a desperate daring in carrying them into effect. And though now well stricken in years, there is no warrior more constantly lurking in the path of the enemy, and when it comes to the deadly struggle, no voice is raised in a louder war whoop, and no arm falls heavier upon their foes, than that of the Iotan chief.

The old warrior welcomed us cordially, then turning round he rode with us in the direction of his village. While he was speaking with the commissioner, several dusky forms clambered the high bluff before us, and stood upon its dizzy verge, watching our movements. Suddenly the Iotan galloped a few yards in front, and waved his arm, uttering a long, shrill yell. It was answered by a loud whoop from those on the hill; who instantly commenced whirling their blankets around their heads. Then all was silent.

For a few moments we were in doubt as to the meaning of the manœuvre; but suddenly a loud roar rose from behind the bluff, and a dark troop of wild horsemen burst round its base, and came pouring down upon us. There must have been several hundred of them. Every man was naked, but glaring with paint. They flooded onward, pealing out scream

upon scream, brandishing their spears, and whirling their tomahawks around their heads. It seemed as if old Pluto had given a holiday, and that his crew were revelling upon the earth, under the forms of these snorting steeds and their wilder masters. Still they came on, and the din increased. The old chief was unmoved and sat like a statue upon his horse. I looked around upon our little band, there were several lowering brows and tightly compressed lips, and the fingers of two or three were on their gun triggers. They were not accustomed to the Indian welcome; and to them, all this long parade of yelling warriors wore a menacing appearance. The band had now approached within a hundred yards. We could perceive the flashing eyes of the straining horses, the bare teeth, scowling brows and starting muscles of the riders. Bow clattered against bow; to-

mahawk clashed against tomahawk, and voice was blended with voice, until the whole din rose in the air, like the wild tumultuous roar of a raging sea. They were close upon us;—another moment—and we were lost. The eyes of the soldiers began to flash fire, their teeth were clenched, and there was an expression about their faces, which told, that in spite of numbers, their resistance would be bloody. At that moment, at a signal of the Iotan, the wild horde separated, and whirled around, enveloped in a cloud of dust.

The old chief smiled with an air of grim satisfaction, as he observed the effect produced upon us by his warriors; then raising his voice, he joined in the wild melée around us. Horse dashed against horse, as the band swept onward in a large circle. Some were hurled from their seats; others clung to the manes of

the maddened horses. The strong poured down upon the weak and brushed them from their paths. Ever and anon, some little pepper-spirited horse, vexed with the hustling, would pause to discharge his heels into the ribs of his next neighbour; but before it could be done, the crowd would press upon him, and again he would be borne onward, in the rushing course of the living whirlpool. No one regarded his neighbour; each was under the influence of a mad excitement. A giant Indian was dashing around, upon a horse as powerful as himself, at the inner verge of the ring. In front of him was another, on a little nag, who kept near the border for safety. Suddenly they came in contact. The powerful steed swept onward as if he had met with no obstacle. The little horse spun out of his path, and his rider threw a somerset in the air, landing in the very midst of the

throng. Fifty hoofs clattered over his head; but he scrambled out, caught his horse, bounded on his back with a loud whoop, and flourish of his tomahawk, and pursued his course as if nothing had happened.

After this scene of hubbub and confusion had continued for about fifteen minutes, the crowd gradually ceased its clamor, and formed in a large circle round us, with their horses' heads towards the party. Presently the ring broke and was extended in two lines, through which a band of about thirty warriors slowly advanced, to a long solemn chant, sung by the whole troop, and accompanied by a kind of drum. This band was formed of the flower of the Indian village. None were admitted except those who could boast of having taken a certain number of scalps, or of having performed an equally honourable service, in stealing a

large number of horses. These warriors were highly ornamented; paint of every hue was laid upon their bodies. Their heads were decorated with feathers and the variegated plumage of the gaudy birds of the Platte islands. Long strings of wampum hung from their necks and ears. Each bore a calumet adorned with feathers and tinkling bells. Some wore glittering armlets and collars of tin. Their heads were shaven, and covered with vermilion, and from the top of each hung the chivalrous scalp lock, generally adorned with an eagle's plume. As much care had been bestowed upon the horses as upon their riders, and they had been selected from the whole village. They now moved forward with proud step, as if conscious of the haughty character of those who guided them; but this was as much owing to the horsemanship of the riders, as to the spirit of the animals themselves; for there

is no class of people better able to show off the points of a horse than the Indians, for they almost live in their saddle from childhood.

The band moved slowly forward, and then commenced walking their horses round, abreast, in the space between the multitude and our party; still keeping up their loud and not inharmonious song, which we afterwards learned, was in praise of the whites—that is, of their liberality.

At length the chief gave a signal, and this troop fell back into the general crowd. Several horses were then presented to the party by the braves and distinguished warriors.

While this was going on, one old warrior, who was notorious for being the greatest thief, and for having killed more men than any other in the village, rose up to boast of what he had done in his younger days; and to let us know that he

was not a man to be overlooked—a thing which seemed very likely to happen in the bustle which prevailed. He was lean and shrivelled, but his strength must have been prodigious in his prime, for every muscle rose like a rope, upon his withered frame. He spoke for about fifteen minutes, and then drew back. When he had concluded, another old man rose up, and in like manner vaunted his former exploits, many of which savoured strongly of the marvellous. These speeches were translated with great gravity by the interpreter, who, to confirm our wavering belief, took an opportunity of whispering into our ears, that, "in boasting of his exploits an Indian was always scrupulous in adhering to the truth." This was perfectly convincing; and while he travelled along within the verge of possibility, we were resolved to give credence to all that he uttered.

After listening to a few more of these worthies, and smoking a few pipes of kin-ne-ka-neek, with the different chiefs, the Iotan rose up, and the party prepared to move onward towards the town.

In crossing the prairie, which separated us from the village, our course was stopped by a deep gulley, which about a dozen squaws were engaged in filling with bushes and weeds, to render it passable for the heavy wagons. While this was going on, the old Indian who had first delivered his address, came sweeping up at a full gallop. He did not pause at the hollow; but probably for the purpose of showing off his horsemanship, dashed down into it. His horse made a vigorous spring up the opposite bank, but lost his footing on its slippery verge, and after a desperate scrambling, rolled with his rider floundering in the mud at the bottom. There was a loud shout of laughter at his

expense. For a moment he stood glaring about him like an angry tiger; then raising his withered arm, he shook it at the crowd. "Laugh on! laugh on!" exclaimed he, "I am old and feeble now; but there was a time when you would not have dared to have done this." Having given vent to his impotent rage, he sprang upon his horse, scrambled up the bank, and galloped forward to the village.

In the course of an hour we reached the town. A large concourse of women and children followed at the heels of the party, and clustered like bees around the heavy wagons as they toiled along. We passed through the town, and fixed upon a small hill at about five hundred yards distance, as our camping ground. Accordingly the heavy wagons were drawn up; the tents were pitched around them, and the horses and oxen, being released from their labours, were sent off to a thick

bottom of timber at a short distance, where the wild pea vines were matting together in the greatest luxuriance.

The village of the Otoe Indians is situated upon a ridge of swelling hills overlooking the darkly wooded banks of the Platte river, about a quarter of a mile distant. There is but little beauty or neatness about an Indian town. The lodges are built in the shape of a half egg. They frequently are twenty feet in height, and sometimes sixty in diameter. The roofs are formed of long poles, which diverge like the radii of a circle, from one common centre. The ring of the circle is formed of upright posts, driven closely together in the ground, and projecting upward about five feet. These are interwoven with brushwood and the smaller branches of trees, and form the support of the outer end of the poles composing the roof, the interstices of which

are also interwoven with twigs and brush-wood. The whole is then covered with earth, and when finished resembles a large hillock. The town contained about seventy of these lodges, standing singly or in groups, without any attention to order or regularity. Within, they are capacious, but dark, being lighted, merely by a small aperture at the top, which serves both as window and chimney. The fire is built in a cavity in the centre, directly under the hole in the roof, by which the smoke escapes after floating in easy wreaths about the interior.

As the lodges are very spacious, a little back from the fire there is a circular range of tree trunks standing like columns, and connected by timber laid in their forks, forming a support for the roof, which otherwise, from the great length of the poles that form it, and the heavy mass of superincumbent earth, might fall in,

and bury the inhabitants. Around the wall of the building, are ranged cribs or berths for sleeping, screened from view by heavy mats of grass and rushes. Over the fire is inclined a forked stake, in the hook of which hangs a large kettle, generally filled with buffalo flesh and corn. This, to judge from its looks, is never removed from the fire, even for the purpose of cleaning it.

CHAPTER XVII.

Indian Habits.—The Escape.

We had been a week in the village, and had become familiar with all the antiquated gossips of the place. The old warriors would stop us as we lounged around, to listen to some sly joke, which as in duty bound, we relished most highly; though the wit of it was for the most part beyond our fathom, as it lay hid in the arcana of their language. The old squaws would hold us by the button, and whine into our ears some lugubrious tale of misery, equally unintelligible. The children soon lost the shyness, which had at first marked their conduct; they were continually hanging around the tents, teasing the black

cook, or frightening the oxen. When not thus engaged, they were scampering like deer across the prairie, in the enjoyment of their wild games. Here and there, too, a knot were busily engaged in gambling away arrows, which they had received from their parents; discussing with the most earnest eagerness, the fairness and unfairness of each toss of their competitor.

Our tents became the gathering place of the whole tribe, where they assembled to discuss the news of the day. Here they would light their pipes, and talk over the deeds of former times; of scalps taken—of horses stolen—of buffalo hunts, and of hair breadth escapes from the Sioux and Osage Indians. All the incidents which tend to variegate the desultory life of a savage, were here brought into review by the gossiping group; receiving their meed of praise or censure, as they deserved it.

Among the rest they spoke high in praise of a young Indian, who stood at a little distance. He was leaning against a wheel of one of the wagons, gazing, though with an evident air of abstraction, upon the group collected round the fire. He was scarcely twenty; yet he was already a brave, and stood high among the older warriors. A long feather hung from his scalp-lock, and was his only ornament. A blanket was thrown loosely over the lower part of his body, and was his only covering. Among various things related of him, was the following.

A few weeks before our arrival at the village, he was returning one afternoon, from an unsuccessful hunting excursion, which had taken him to a great distance from his home. The crimson disk of the sun was scarcely visible above the tops of the prairie hills. The burning heat of a hot summer's day was mellowing down

into the mildness of a July evening, and one by one, the ravens and vultures were winging a steady course towards their roosts in the thick forest skirting the Missouri.

The Otoe had yet twenty miles to travel, and it would be night-fall before he could reach his village; but he would not push his generous steed, which was already much fatigued. He therefore, rode slowly across the prairie, occasionally chirruping to the horse, or humming some Indian song.

Suddenly his quick eye was caught by the appearance of a black speck, which rose over the edge of a distant hill, between himself and the setting sun. In a moment after, the whole figure of a mounted Indian emerged to view, followed by four others, also mounted. They did not observe the Otoe, but continued riding along the top of the ridge,

in the same direction with himself. Supposing them to be some of his own tribe, he checked his horse, and raised a loud whoop to attract their notice.

At first they did not hear him; but a second shout raised at the full pitch of his lungs, brought them to a halt. A short consultation seemed to take place; after which they rode slowly, and carelessly towards him, as if they by no means intended to hurry themselves in obeying his call. As they were some distance off, he dismounted from his horse, laid his rifle in the grass in front of him, and lighting his pipe, prepared to smoke until they should reach him. He lay intently watching them, as they drew nearer. He however, soon discovered from some peculiarity in their dress, that they were not Otoes, but as he supposed Konzas, who were then at peace with his tribe.

Fearing nothing, therefore, he continu-

ed lolling on the grass, and smoking. As they approached still nearer, their cautious movements awakened suspicion, and he began to doubt their being Konzas. Raising himself, he sat earnestly watching them with every sense on the alert, though he continued to smoke his pipe with apparent tranquillity.

He now observed that they gradually separated, as if their object was to surround him as he sat. Another glance, showed that they were Osages, the deadly foes of his tribe. Dashing his pipe to the ground, he bent hastily forward to seize his rifle. It was fortunate for him that he did so; for at the instant, a bullet aimed at his heart whizzed past him, cutting a deep gash in his shoulder. In an instant he sprang upon his horse. The Osage war whoop rang in his ear; but with that daring that never forsakes an Indian, he brandished his rifle in the air, and

raising his own answering war cry, dashed off like the wind. He had the start by only a hundred yards. Everything depended upon the speed and bottom of his horse; but he was a tried one, and nobly did his duty. Hill and dale disappeared behind him. Scarcely had he vanished from the top of one ridge, ere his hoofs clattered over the top of the next. But his enemies pressed on at the same mad rate. The clang of their horses' hoofs rang in the ear of the Otoe with a fearful clearness. Luckily they could not pause to take aim with their rifles. At two miles' distance was a skirt of forest; it was growing dark, and could he but reach this, he would be safe. His horse, however, was nearly broken down; he panted, and staggered. The rider plied the lash with phrenzied fierceness; the generous animal taxed his strength to the uttermost;

but nature was exhausted. Within a quarter of a mile of the timber, he began to fail, when his rider sprang from his back and bounded forward on foot. A loud cry burst from his pursuers, as they saw him abandon his horse; but there was little cause for the shout; for his speed nearly equalled that of their jaded steeds. He was within about a hundred yards of the thicket, when finding that they could not overtake him, the Osages drew up and discharged their pieces. The bullets pattered among the leaves of the grove, but missed their mark. The Otoe turned half round, when on the border of the bushes, shook his rifle in the air, and raising a yell of triumph, plunged into the thicket.

The advantage was now on his side, for the Osages dared not approach, lest he should fire upon them from his covert.

They rode up and down for a time, at a distance, vainly endeavouring to catch a glimpse of his figure; then returned across the prairie, contenting themselves with carrying off the deserted horse.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Rival Chiefs.—Indian Feasts.

Besides the Iotan, there are two other chiefs, inferior in rank, and far less popular. It was amusing to see how jealous a watchfulness each held over the actions of the other—each afraid to take a single step in the transaction of any business whatever, lest it should give some advantage to his rival. They reminded me strongly of two belligerent cats, mounted on the top of some gutter, glaring in each other's eyes, and growling deep muttered sounds of wrath; but neither venturing to attack or retreat, lest by some unguarded movement, he should expose some unprotected part to the fangs of his adversary. The Indian names of these two worthies I

have forgotten; but they are known to the trappers by those of the the Big Kaw (or Kanzas) and the Thief.

This last honourable badge of distinction, was bestowed upon the father of the present possessor; but in process of time, the old Thief was gathered to his fathers, and the young Thief reigned in his stead. He inherited his name, his worn out blankets, and so large a number of grudges and private quarrels, that, in acting as executor and revenging his father's injuries, years had elapsed before he could fairly say that the debts of the deceased were paid off.

The young Thief had, however, now become the old Thief. His hair was silvered by age; and he had arrived at that period of life which old folks are apt to call "the years of discretion." That is, he had passed the prime of his usefulness, and had reached that age, when strong

attachments are usually formed to easy comforts and chimney corners.

The Big Kaw is a short thick Indian, rather good natured, but gifted with a large supply of mulish obstinacy, and a temper like gunpowder. Oppose him—flash!—he is in a blaze; the children scamper; the squaws scatter; the rabble vanish. None stay to listen to the outpourings of his wrath, unless it may be one or two old fellows, who are too decrepit to get out of his way, or are blessed with so happy a hardness of hearing, as to render it agreeable to them to be conversed with, even though by a man in a passion.

The family of this chief consists of several wives, and a son, who, is one of the most intelligent young men in the village. He, however, is the very counterpart of the old man in disposition; and when the two get fairly excited, the village is in an uproar.

If the quarrel is commenced in a lodge, the building is instantly vacated by the rest of its occupants, until the silence which reigns within, gives notice that the storm has blown over. Upon these occasions, it is said that those who return, generally find the old man looking very foolish, and the son very angry. From this it is suspected that the former is held in subjection by his graceless offspring. Be that as it may, the young warrior still retains a strong affection for his fond old father. Although in his anger, he sometimes oversteps the bounds of propriety, and conducts himself in an indecorous manner towards him, yet upon the whole he is looked upon as a pattern of filial piety—particularly, as he permits nobody to bully his father, but himself. The Thief was in every respect the reverse of his rival. He was tall and wirey—of that construction which

denotes extreme hardiness of constitution, united with a great lack of superfluous flesh. He was calm and quiet in all his movements, and would sit for hours in the same posture, his eyes alone keeping watch. He slid in and out of our tent, with a noiseless step, which frequently caused us to be unaware either of his presence or his absence. We were often startled, when least expecting it, by hearing his deep sonorous tones at our elbows.

The Iotan chief is the lord paramount of the village. With that cunning policy for which he is noted, he contrives, by balancing the interest of the two inferior chiefs, to keep them so constantly engaged in watching each other, that they have no time to turn their attention to himself.

On the first day of our arrival, we were invited to feast with about half the village. The first lodge which we entered was that of the Iotan. We found him sitting cross-

legged upon some cushions, to receive us. Upon our coming up to him, he presented the commissioner with a seat next himself. Then turning to his wife, he called for the feast, which consisted of dried buffalo flesh, boiled with a large quantity of hard corn. The interior of his abode wore but a dull, dingy look. The rafters were almost invisible for the eddying clouds of smoke, lazily seeking the hole in the roof, which served for the chimney.

This old chief had divided his affections among five wives. They were seated in different parts of the lodge, engaged in pounding corn, or chattering over the news of the day. They were evidently under but little subjection. While we were eating with him, the old man took the opportunity to disburthen his heart. He let us into a knowledge of the miseries to which he was subjected from their caprices; and the difficulties which he

found in maintaining a proper discipline where there were so many mistresses and but one master.

Upon leaving the lodge, we next visited that of the Big Kaw. He guided us himself through the intricacies of the town, until we reached the building and entered through its low funnel-mouthed door. We had scarcely seated ourselves, before we found that we had got into warm quarters. The lady of the house had not expected company, and was unprepared for visiters. There was evidently a storm gathering. I read it in her lowering eyes, and in the uneasy, stealthy look of the Indian. He made no parade, but glided across the building, and motioned us a seat; with a guilty air; then slunk upon a cushion, with the look of a man who would wish to pass unnoticed. Occasionally he cast towards his helpmate a deprecating glance, like that of a whipped dog—his eye seem-

ed to say, "I know I was wrong in bringing them; but I beseech you to keep quiet now, and you may scold as much as you please when the visiters have gone."

A bowl of dried buffalo flesh was at last placed before us; the viands being rather tough, drew forth some remark from our host, half facetious, half apologetic. By accident it reached the hearing of the squaw, who thought that it was intended as a reflection upon her. In an instant she was in a blaze, and opened her batteries upon the chief, pouring out one continuous torrent of invective. Hot headed and irascible as he naturally was, nevertheless for a moment he shrank under it; and if it could have been done with credit to himself, probably would have evacuated the field; but in the present case that was impossible; and to be thus lorded over by his wife, and before strangers was intolerable. Though for

a moment overawed by the attack, his touch-paper temper began to take fire. At first it only evinced itself by a few sulky shakes of the head; but at last it burst through all restraint, and sent back a fire as hot as was given. The war was furious for some moments, and apparently carried on with equal vigour on both sides; but at length the bursts from the chief grew fewer and fewer: he was evidently getting worsted; his lips grew closer—more resolved, and his look began to wander round the dwelling, until at last it rested upon a large stick which lay on the floor at a little distance. A glance of his eye called the attention of his wife in that direction. It is probable that she understood its meaning, for after a few sulky looks, and a few sullen mutterings, her words grew more and more rare, and at last ceased altogether.

We remained but a short time longer, and after visiting the lodges of several others, returned to our tents.

CHAPTER XIX.

Domestic Grievances.

Among the number of our daily visiters, were three old squaws, hideously ugly, and filthy in the extreme. Wrinkle upon wrinkle, covered their faces, and layer upon layer of dirt, covered the wrinkles. Their long, gray, uncombed hair, hung in thick, matted locks, reaching nearly to their waists; and each of their long skinny arms, with which they coaxingly patted us, resembled in appearance and delicacy, the trunk of a grape vine. These old harridans, were perfect nuisances. They were constantly lingering about the door of the tent, on the look-out for plunder. They seemed to possess the power of ubiquity;

it would have puzzled Argus to keep track of their movements. They were shuffling around all day long, peeping into every hole and cranny. One of them even stole meat from the frying pan, while the black cook had turned his head to drive off the other.

Come upon them when we would, they were always sure to greet us with a half-smirking, half-piteous look; but the moment we turned away, they were at their old occupations. They were so constantly at work, that there was some talk of appointing a person, whose sole employment should be, to keep a keen eye to their movements. They lived at our tent doors, and for aught we knew to the contrary, might sleep there too; for we left them there in the evenings, and we found them at their posts before sunrise. Indeed so constant was their presence, that the sight of one of them moving off towards

the town, was the signal for a general search, as they seldom made their disappearance, without taking with them some article which did not belong to them.

They had taken a particular fancy to Jones, the black cook. This unlucky wight was yet young in years, and inexperienced in the ways of the world. He had a fond and foolish heart, and acknowledged that he always felt a sort of sneaking kindness for the other sex. When dwelling upon the subject, he used to open his eyes, until the small speck of a pupil, was almost lost in the immense field of white, and exclaim, "I ai'nt afeard of no man; but I can't stand the wimmen."

To the young urchins, who intruded into his domains, he was not so indulgent, but kept a keen eye and a long stick for their especial benefit. This, however, only subjected him to ten times more annoyance. They would pull him

by the coat tail, or jerk his ragged pantaloons, until they worked him up into a passion. Then their greatest delight, was to be hunted over the green by the Black Bear, (the name which he had received among them.) He might as well have followed a cloud. They sprang like fawns over the prairie, scarcely appearing to rustle the grass in their flight. They played around him like swallows, until completely exhausted by his own lumbering movements, he was fain to give out, and return unavenged to his occupations. Wo to the unlucky urchin, however, who, having once been guilty, should venture at any subsequent time within his reach. A hearty cuffing would convince him, that the memory of the Black Bear was more tenacious than his own, and would warn him in future to keep clear of so dangerous a neighbourhood.

During the whole of our journey from fort Leavenworth to the Otoe town, Mordecai, the driver of one of the dearborns, had kept his fellow servants in a state of constant tribulation. He gave such bloody accounts of Indians, and Indian murders, that they regarded death as almost inevitable; and I suspect would have deserted at the first opportunity, had there not been more danger in leaving than in remaining with the party. When, however, we had been received by the Otoes, and the danger was past, Mordecai forgot his tales of terror. He pretended a kind of fellow-feeling for the Otoes. He talked Creek to the old women, who were willing to understand any language, so they might but remain sufficiently near the tents, to get an opportunity of stealing. He regarded the children that hung round, with a kind of parental affection, and thoroughly discountenanced the thwackings

which Jones so liberally bestowed upon them.

When we were perfectly settled in our camp, the horses which he had driven, were turned adrift with the rest. He then took upon himself the duties of cook, devolving upon Jones the less honourable employment of cutting wood for fuel. He would stand by the hour, with a red flannel night-cap stuck upon the side of his head; his butcher-knife in one hand, and his arm akimbo, descanting upon the arduousness of the office.

He had a high opinion of his own importance, and made no hesitation in saying, that he ranked next to the Commissioner, in the estimation of the Indians; that Mr. Ellsworth was respected by the chiefs on account of his having charge of the presents. As for himself, that he was popular among the vagabonds of the village; for they had no hope of presents,

and therefore, were delighted to come in for a share of the tit-bits and choice morsels which it was in his power to distribute, while cooking.

Notwithstanding the altered tone of Mordecai, and the cordiality of our reception, there was one individual who remained inveterate in his prejudices against them. This was the French boy, Joe. He never spoke of the Indians without some qualifying expression of ill will. Whenever any thing was stolen, he at once attributed it to them. Frequently, however, his loud vociferation on these occasions, caused us strongly to suspect that he was the delinquent, and that this clamour of indignation was raised, that he might escape unsuspected.

His sole occupation was, to spread the bearskins at night, and remove them in the morning. During the rest of the day, he strolled about abusing the Indians,

cracking his whip, or hallooing at the stray curs who were skulking around.

"Mordecai," said he one day, to that worthy, who was standing in the midst of a group of Indians, in his usual stately attitude, with one hand tucked in his side, while the other held a frying pan, "Mordecai, dere is no good in having dese Ingens around you; dey'm all d——d rascals any how."

Mordecai gave a self-satisfied smirk, threw a compassionate glance at Joe, then extending his arm with an impressive air, "Joe," said he, "don't abuse the Indians, it hurts my feelings—I'm an Indian myself."

"Yes, a nigger von," replied Joe, turning upon his heel.

It seems too, that the Iotan was of the same opinion; for whenever Mordecai spoke of his Indian descent, the old warrior quietly shook his head, remarking

"that he had never seen an Indian with woolly hair."

It was evident, however, that his contempt was engendered by seeing him perform menial offices; for like all Indians, he had a great distaste for labour, and respected those only, who, like himself, did nothing.

CHAPTER XX.

A Man of the World.

A NUMBER of idlers usually assembled in front of our tents, during the fine, sunshiny afternoons, to sing their songs, smoke their pipes, and regale themselves by listening to the adventures of their neighbours, which they had heard recounted a hundred times before. Among them was a tall, thin Indian, with a wrinkled, hard-looking face, and a head covered with a profusion of long, knotty hair, which he occasionally combed, by raking it with his fingers. He seemed as if he had been smoke-dried for a century, until his flesh had hardened into gristle; and looked as if further shrivelling was an im-

possibility. He had a very small, busy eye, which twinkled with an incessant play of humour. It overcame even the grave disposition of the oldest warriors, and surprised them into as broad a laugh, as was ever known to proceed from the mouth, of the most scape-gallows Indian of the tribe, or even from the broader mouth of that vociferous character, the Black Bear.

He usually made his appearance at the door of the tent, a little after sunrise, and continued in its neighbourhood, during the whole day. Though he shifted from the fire to the tent door, as the process of cooking, and carrying the meals within, went forward.

His usual dress was an old buffalo robe, worn almost bare of hair, and in his hand he carried a long handled pipe, as antiquated as himself. He was one of those poor, but merry dogs, who are found in all

countries—taking the world as it goes, laughing at care, and free from all of those disturbances which fret their fellow men. He had never held any property of his own, he had never burthened himself with a wife, he had never built a lodge to shelter him. He was a perfect man of the world, and supported himself by visiting his neighbours. The lodges of the whole tribe he looked upon as his own property; the children of the whole nation, were equally under his charge. His bed was his time worn buffalo robe; and the abode in which night surprised him, was his usual resting place, until the next morning sun awakened him. He was a welcome visiter at the stately dwelling of the chief, and in the less noble, though to him equally prized wigwam, of one of the lowest of the town; for in wealth, they were all superior to him, and he thought that a poor devil like himself, with scarce a tatter

to his back, had no right to sneer at the good will of any individual, who, however needy, was better off than himself. Notwithstanding the apparent easiness with which he slid through the world, his life had not been without its spice of adventure. Nor had the lapse of fifty years flown over his head, without bringing in its train, a host of those mishaps both by "flood and field," with which the history of a savage, is ever teeming. These he was accustomed to relate in the different lodges, to the assembled group of old and young, with a degree of humour which completely enraptured the women, and rendered him a welcome guest in every dwelling in the town.

He was sitting as usual, one fine afternoon, at the door of the tent. After finishing his pipe, he related an account, of his having been chased by a party of Sioux Indians, across the prairie which

lay between the Elk Horn river and the Missouri, on his way to the Otoe Agency. After laughing heartily, the interpreter translated it for the benefit of the rest.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Chase.

The Otoe Agency is situated upon the banks of the Missouri river, at thirty-five miles distance from the Otoe village. It consists of half a dozen rough buildings, tenanted by as rough inhabitants. The most of these are half breed Indians, with full blooded squaws for wives, and an immense number of mongrel children. The latter may be seen from morning till night, lying on the ground in front of the agent's dwelling; and basking in the sunshine, with that listless enjoyment which they inherit with their Indian blood.

Early one clear morning, the Indian

mentioned in the last chapter, left the Otoe village on a visit to the agency. After swimming the Platte, and fording the pure still waters of the Elk Horn, he strapped his time worn buffalo robe tightly round his body and proceeded onward.

As he was on a friendly visit, to gossip with his old cronies at the agency, he had no weapon, but carried under his arm his inseparable companion, his pipe. As this pipe is destined to bear a conspicuous part in the adventure which is to follow, it would perhaps be worth while to describe it. The stem was of ash, about four feet in length, half an inch in diameter, and charred in the fire, until it had acquired a dirty brown colour. The bowl was of stone, to contain the kinne-ka-neek,* which an Indian uses as a

* *Kinne-ka-neek* is a substance used by the Indians s a substitute for tobacco. It is made by crushing

substitute for tobacco. He usually carries it about him in a small pouch, formed of the entire skin of a young otter, muskrat, or fox squirrel.

The route to the Otoe Agency, lay across a range of steep, ragged ridges. The Indian sauntered slowly along. He had a whole summer's day before him, and was never in a hurry in his movements. Arrived at the summit of a hill which

to fineness the dried leaves or bark of the wild sumach. This is then mixed with plug tobacco, cut fine, and is smoked by them. The proportion of tobacco to sumach is about one fourth. The tobacco pouch of the Indians, is always formed of the skin of one of the animals above mentioned. The head is left appended to it, and the bones, intestines, and fleshy substance are removed from the body through a small hole cut in the throat, which afterwards serves as the mouth of the pouch. These pouches are often highly ornamented, with stained porcupine quills, beads, and if their owners can obtain them, hawk's bells.

commanded a wide prospect, he paused to cast a wary look around him. The country lay spread out at his feet. Here and there it was broken by small patches of timber and brushwood, which served to give relief to the otherwise barren appearance of the prairie. There was nothing to be seen wearing a hostile garb—not even a wolf. Notwithstanding this apparent security, his watchfulness never slumbered. He had been too often hunted and harassed by foes, to relax for an instant that vigilance, which from necessity, becomes a constant habit with an Indian.

He travelled for several hours, and his journey was nearly at its end. The tall, thick timber, which darkened the bank of the Missouri, was now seen raising its dusky outline above the summits of the distant ridges. The groves, and tangled thickets, were becoming more and more frequent, and every thing bespoke a near approach

to that king of rivers, the mighty Missouri.

A smooth prairie about two miles in width, alone separated the Indian from the groves in which the agency was nestled. A few yards in front of him, was a low hillock, between two thick clusters of bushes. He sauntered to the top and looked around. To the left was a small clump of bushes fringing the bottom of the hill; but beyond, in that direction, there was no object to break the spotless green of the prairie. It stretched far off to the northward, until its distant verge was mingled with the haze of the sky. To his right, was another clump of thicket, which clustered at the base of the hill, and swept off to a distant ravine. At a short distance beyond this, a long line of lofty timber, rising above a crowded underbrush, stretched off through the prairie, until it joined the forest of the Missouri.

All appeared clear of enemies. So, wrapping his robe still closer around him, the Indian was preparing to quit his stand, when his quick eye was caught by the quivering motion of a bush, in the thicket at the bottom of the hill, on his left. In an instant every sense was on the alert;—it might be a deer, or it might be a lurking foe. He paused, and watched in breathless silence. The bush was again agitated, the painted head of an Indian emerged from among the leaves, and the form of another was dimly seen crouching in the bushes.

The Otoe at once recognized them for Sioux, the bitterest and most powerful foes of his tribe. His loud taunting laugh, accompanied by the Otoe war cry, announced to the lurking savages that they were discovered. In an instant they sprang forth and raised the well known war cry of their tribe.

The Otoe fled down the opposite side of the hill, making for a thicket of bushes and vines at its foot. As he ran he grasped the stem of his pipe in one hand, and the stone bowl in the other. He protruded the end beyond his side, in such a manner as to lead his enemies to suppose that he was armed with a rifle, and carrying it at full cock, ready to be discharged.

His pursuers, to the number of four, followed at his heels, like a pack of hounds in full cry. They gained upon him, for age had stiffened his joints; but by dint of hard straining he gained the covert of brushwood, leaving them full two hundred yards behind. A shout betrayed their disappointment. The wary old savage now threaded his way, swiftly, but with great caution through the thick maze of bushes. He scarcely bended a twig or rustled a leaf, lest it should catch the observant eyes or quick ears of the Sioux, whom he

could perceive lurking round, though keeping out of rifle shot distance.

At last the motion of a large bush, through which he was endeavouring to force a passage, revealed his position. In an instant each Indian fitted an arrow to his bow, and stood ready to let fly his shaft the moment he could get sight of the game; but they were still careful to keep beyond the reach of the supposed rifle. At length they drew nearer, and stood upon the edge of a ridge, not more than a hundred yards off. An arrow could not be sent with certainty at that distance; but a bullet could. The Otoe suddenly raised his wild looking head above the bushes and levelled his pipe. A loud yell burst from the Sioux, and they darted below the ridge of the hill, beyond his sight, to escape the dreaded shot. The moment that they disappeared, the Otoe sprang forward and ran.

He had succeeded in gaining several hundred yards through the underwood, when his route was again detected. He again raised his head above the bushes; his pipe was again to his shoulder, and pointed in the direction of the hostile group. Once more they disappeared beneath the ridge, and he pushed forward in his course. This manœuvre was repeated several times, till the Otoe came to where the thicket terminated, and was only separated by about three hundred yards of open prairie, from the wooded bottom of the Missouri.

Seizing the moment of another dispersion of his foes, he burst from the bushes and fled for the timber. He had nearly reached it, when a loud whoop announced that his flight was discovered. His pursuers were obliged to force a path through an intervening skirt of brushwood. This gave him some advantage, and he gained

the timber just as they were emerging from the thicket which he had deserted. After rushing rapidly through the underwood, for a long distance, and after several turnings and doublings, he gradually lost all sounds of pursuit, and reached the Agency in safety, all glorious at having beaten off a war party by means of a pipe.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Metamorphosis.

We had been attending a feast, given at the lodge of the Iotan chief; and were returning through the town, towards the little eminence, on which the white canvass of our tents was fluttering in the wind. As we passed one of the lodges, we observed a group of females in front of it, busily engaged in exposing to the heat of the sun, a large quantity of shelled corn. This was done by scattering it upon a buffalo-skin tent, spread upon the ground for the purpose. One squaw attracted our attention, from her gigantic height; most of the Indian females being under, rather than above

the middle size. As we approached her, there was a masculine coarseness in the features of her face, which rendered her hideously ugly, and formed a contrast, highly in favour of the group around her. We afterwards learned that this strange being, though now clad in the garb of a female, and performing the most menial of their offices, was in reality a man, and had once ranked among the proudest and highest braves of the Otoe nation. His name had once stood foremost in war, and in council. He had led on many an expedition against their noble, but bitter foes, the Osages. In the midst of his bright career he stopped short; a change came over him; and he commenced his present life of degradation and drudgery.

The cause of the change was this. He had been for several weeks absent upon a war expedition, against his usual enemies, the Osages. At a little before sunset, on

a fine afternoon, a band of Indians were seen coming over the hills, towards the Otoe village. It was a troop of way-worn warriors. They counted less than when they started; but their tale of scalps, and their fierce brows when they spoke of the death of their comrades, told that those comrades had not been unavenged. In front of them strode the stately form of the brave. He was wearied with fatigue and fasting; and without staying to receive the greetings of his fellow-townsmen, he hastened to his lodge, and threw himself upon one of the bearskins which form an Indian bed; and there he remained for the night. In the morning he arose from his couch; but he was an altered man. A change, fearful and thrilling, had come over him. His eye was quenched; his proud step wavered; and his haughty frame seemed almost sinking, beneath the pressure of some heavy calamity.

He collected his family around him. He told them that the Great Spirit had visited him in a dream, and had told him that he had now reached the zenith of his reputation; that no voice had more weight at the council fire; that no arm was heavier in battle. The divine visitant concluded by commanding that he should thenceforth relinquish all claim to the rank of a warrior, and assume the dress and avocations of a female. The group around him heard him in sorrow; for they prided themselves upon his high and warlike name; and looked up to him as the defender of their hearths. But none attempted to dissuade him from his determination; for they listened to the communications of the deity, with a veneration equal to his own.

After speaking with his own family, he made known his intention to the nation. They heard him gravely, and sadly, but

they too, assented to the correctness of his resolution. He then returned to his lodge, and took down his bow, from the place which it had occupied, and snapping it in two, threw the fragments into the fire; and buried the tomahawk and rifle, which had often served him in battle. Having finished this, he washed the war paint from his face, and drew the proud eagle's plume from the scalp-lock. From that hour he ceased to be numbered among the warriors of the nation. He spoke not of battle; he took no part in the councils of the tribe; and no longer raised his voice in the wild war-whoop. He had relinquished everything which he had formerly gloried in, for the lowly and servile duties of a female. He knew that his allotted course was marked out for him; that his future life was destined to be one of toil and degradation; but he had fixed his resolution and he pursued his

course with unwavering firmness. Years had elapsed since he first commenced this life of penance. His face was seamed with wrinkles; his frame was yielding to decrepitude; and his ever scowling eye, now plainly showed that the finer feelings of his nature, had been choked by the bitter passions of his heart. His name was scarcely mentioned; and the remembrance of his chivalrous character, was a dream in the minds of his fellows. He was neglected and scorned, by those who had once looked up to him, with love and veneration. He had the misery of seeing others fill the places, which he once filled; and of knowing, that however exalted he once might have been, and however they might have respected his motives, that he was now looked upon as one of the lowest of the nation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Indian Dogs.

THERE are no greater thieves in existence than the Indian dogs; not even excepting the old squaws, who have made it their amusement for half a century. With the last, it is a matter of habit, and practice; but with the former it is instinct. It is also necessary for their existence, that they should be at the same time accomplished thieves, and practised hypocrites. They are never fed by their masters, who are always particularly careful to keep every eatable from their reach, their own appetites being generally sufficient to dispose of every thing of that nature. As far as I was able to judge,

the only act of pastoral kindness which they ever exerted over their canine flock, consisted in flogging them, whenever a chance offered itself.

There is scarcely a lodge which does not patronise at least a dozen of these hangers on, who, with all their thievishness, are the most pious-looking dogs in existence. Frequently, have I observed some gaunt, greedy fellow, who looked as if he had been dieted for a fortnight, steal with a meditative air into the building, as if he had strolled in without observing what he was about, so much were his thoughts occupied with more weighty matters. But notwithstanding his absence of mind, the moment his look fastened upon any article of food, a change came over him. The air of abstraction passed away; every latent faculty was called into play; and his eye fairly blazed with a concentration of thievish longing. Then, with a fixed

gaze, but with an indifferent, lounging step, he would sidle towards the object of his wishes, waiting only for a favourable opportunity to seize his prize, trusting to fortune to make good his retreat. But should he at that moment catch your eye, his flashing, eager look, instantly disappeared, and was succeeded by a meek, deprecating, and unpretending slouch, which seemed to beg that you would not place any improper construction upon his actions.

It was not long before it became known to these gentry that a band of strangers had arrived among them, who were as yet unacquainted with their evil practices. Accordingly they deserted the town, to linger around our tents. The first day was one of jubilee to them, and truly exemplified in us the scriptural saying of "certain men fell among thieves." But we soon became initiated into their cus-

toms; and removed from their reach, every thing which we apprehended might be in the slightest degree palatable, or even digestible.

There appeared to be a most cordial hatred existing between them and the old squaws; who above all things detested opposition in their line of business, and were unwilling that any interlopers should come in to assist in carrying off a share of those spoils which they considered their own peculiar property.

Among the number of our canine visiters were two who seemed to carry on a co-partnership. The one was a little rakish-looking dog, of a dirty white colour, with pinkish-green eyes, who had quite a buckish way of carrying his tail. He was a mighty pragmatical, self-important little body, and was apparently endeavouring to pass himself off for more than he really was. He ranged between the gentlemen

dogs and the rabble dogs of the village. There was a swaggering, self-important air about him, which reminded me strongly of those individuals of the human kind, who are generally to be found in all places, attempting to hide their own natural vulgarity under a great show of dare-devil, rakish gentility. The boon companion of this dog was his reverse in every respect. He was a lean, shaggy fellow, with a drooping slouch to his tail, and quiet, pensive expression of countenance. No one would have suspected him of being the greatest thief in the village; yet such he was; and as such his approaches were most thoroughly discountenanced by all the old squaws, who looked upon him as a most formidable rival. He never attempted to resist their attacks, but fled howling away at the slightest appearance of danger; though half an hour would not elapse before he was as busy as ever. We found that in stealing

he far excelled his companion; who made ten times as much bustle in carrying off ten times as little; and who was frequently left to receive the share of punishment due to both.

They continued together for several days. But at length the partnership dissolved, and each went on to steal for his own private benefit. Many were the sly bits which disappeared, and great was the caution used by the occupants of the tents to keep out of their reach every article which they thought would be acceptable. They continued their visits for several days after their real character had been discovered. But having been detected in the act of dragging off a large bag, which contained some twenty pounds of bacon; and having been several times flogged for their evil practices; and finding that the party had now grown quite cautious of their provisions; they deserted

us altogether—betaking themselves to the town, and leaving their places to be filled by other dogs, equally ravenous, but less experienced in this art of gaining a livelihood.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Indian Life.

To dress and ornament himself with trinkets and gewgaws, is the delight of a savage. The glittering presents of the whites, bear as strong an attraction to the warrior as to the female or the child, though his disciplined habits prevent those loud bursts of pleasure which escape unrestrained from them. Scarcely a day elapsed but a little group would collect before our tents for the purpose of ornamenting themselves. They were apparently very fastidious in their taste; for when hours had been spent by an Indian beau in laying on one streak of paint after another, and in ogling himself by piece-

meal in a small scrap of looking glass, some defect would appear, and with an exclamation of dissatisfaction the whole would be rubbed off. The work would then be recommenced with unabated perseverance until he succeeded in daubing and ornamenting himself to his entire satisfaction.

When the toilette was completed, a surprising change came over the young warriors. They would fling their blankets ostentatiously around them, and with a lordly air lounge through the town; looking first at one of the young squaws, then at another; and occasionally condescending to speak to some dirty-looking brother, with that patronising air which, in all countries, a well-dressed person is apt to assume in conversing with a ragged acquaintance. When they had finished their perambulations, they would mount upon the top of one of the highest lodges, and stand for hours to be gazed at by the

different idlers; a term which, in truth, might be applied to the whole of the male portion of the town.

In war and in hunting there is no being more untiring than the Indian. He will spend days, and weeks, in search of an enemy. If in the course of his travel he meets with a strange track crossing his path, his journey is at an end, until he has satisfied himself whether it is that of a friend or a foe. If it is ascertained to be that of an enemy; and if there is any prospect of gaining a scalp; the main pursuit gives place to this. He follows upon the trail, rapidly and surely, and nothing is left undone to insure the successful accomplishment of his purpose. He endures fatigues of all kinds; fasting and peril are unheeded by him; he has but one aim: it is murder. There is but little chivalry in the Indian warfare. The pursuer steals like a snake upon his foe. He

gives him no warning—no opportunity to resist his fate. Often the death-scream of the victim is simultaneous with the crack of the rifle, that gave him the first notice of a foe.

In peace, and in his own village, the Indian is a different being. He lounges about listlessly; he will sit for hours watching the children at their games; or will stop at the different lodges to hear the floating rumours of the town. Sometimes a knot of five or six will gather together, for the sake of talking over their own domestic grievances, and abusing their wives behind their backs; or they will assemble in the prairie, and relate to the young men their exploits in battle; their success in hunting; the deeds of the different noted men of the village; always winding up with the injunction of, "Go thou and do likewise." At a little distance from these, a single warrior may be

seen lolling in the grass; warming himself in the sunshine; and drawling out a dull, sleepy song, with an air of the most perfect indifference to all things, past, present, and to come. Further on, two or three may be observed strolling along the summits of the different prairie hills, and apparently keeping watch over the neighbouring country.

In war an Indian is all activity—the creature of excitement; but there is not a more listless being in existence, when this grand object does not call into play the latent energies of his nature.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Indian Guard.

During our stay at the village, the crowd of visiters and pilferers, increased from day to day. The chief, therefore, stationed one of the warriors at the encampment, to keep off idlers and intruders of all descriptions, and above all to have a keen eye to the movements of the dogs and old women. At the same time he took occasion to let us know, that though the warrior had been selected by himself, his pay would be expected to come from the hands of the Commissioner. On the following morning the guard made his appearance, and prepared to enter

upon his office. He was tall and thin, with a shaved head, and a body highly painted with vermilion. He wore, or rather carried with him, a dirty blanket; which, with a small piece of blue cloth, around his hips, and a ragged pair of mocassins, completed his dress, and the whole of his worldly possessions. Like most men in office, he began to hold his head higher than the rest of the world; and to look with a patronising air upon his former cronies. He forthwith commenced the discharge of his duties, with that assiduity which fully verified the trite, but true proverb, "a new broom sweeps clean." He routed the droves of vagabond children. He hunted the old squaws over the prairie, till nothing in the shape of a petticoat, dared venture in the neighbourhood. A perpetual whining and howling of curs, accompanied by the hearty thwacks of a cudgel, in-

formed us that this portion of our visiters, had also been treated with all the respect due to so numerous and busy a community.

This lasted for a day; after which, a perfect calm reigned throughout the camp. There was no excitement; for the guard had monopolized it. There was no squabbling, or howling; for the women were driven off, and the dogs knew better than to venture a second time, within the reach of a cudgel, whose favours were bestowed with such an unsparing liberality.

The office now became a sinecure. The guard sat for hours, upon the head of an empty pork barrel, drumming his heels against its sides, and trolling out some Indian ditty; or occasionally bellowing out a threat, at some urchin, who ventured to steal a distant look at the forbidden premises. When this became tedious, he

stretched himself at full length, on the grass, and resumed his old occupation of singing. An hour spent at this, exhausted his patience. He then rose up, threw his blanket across his shoulders, and swaggered off to the village to hear the news, and to take a chat with the old folks, who treated him with the greatest deference, now that he was in office. After paying one of these visits, he always returned to his post, and regaled us, as well as he was able, with the news of the day. By degrees, his jurisdiction seemed to increase, until at last from the charge of our goods and chattels, it reached to the charge of ourselves; and none of the party could leave the tent, without receiving a very inquiring look, as to what might be the nature of the business which called him forth. All these things tended vastly to raise him in the estimation of the village; though I verily believe, that at the bottom,

he was one of the most arrant vagabonds breathing; and that the chief, acting upon the principle usually followed by politicians of the present day, had promoted him to office, because it was necessary that something should be done for him, and because there was no other way of doing it.

Great as had been his display of diligence for the first day, it soon disappeared; and at the end of three days, there was little difference in the appearance of the camp, from that which it wore previous to his appointment. According to his notions, he had performed all that was necessary to entitle him to his pay, and any further labour, he considered as altogether superfluous. Before a week had elapsed, he was nearly as great an annoyance as any of the idlers, whom it was his business to remove.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Otoe Council.

A DAY had been appointed for holding a council with the nation, for the purpose of forming a treaty, with respect to the lands lying in the neighbourhood of the Nemahaw river. The hour determined upon, was three o'clock; and at that time, we proceeded from the tent to the town, with a string of children at our heels.

We found nearly the whole tribe assembled, and seated in circles, in the large lodge of the Iotan chief. At the far end of the building, was the Iotan; and by his side, were stationed those two worthies, the Big Kaw, and the Thief. Next them, were the stern forms of the older

warriors and braves. There was something solemn in the unyielding features of these war-worn veterans. They sat, as motionless as stone—moving not a single muscle of their dusky countenances. They had thrown aside their usual careless deportment, and all were prepared to listen, with intense interest, to the terms of the treaty. This was observable, not only in the principal braves, but throughout the whole assembly. Even the veriest scapegrace assumed an air of dignity, befitting the occasion.

The lodge was excessively crowded. One ring was formed beyond another; one dark head rose behind another; until the dim, dusk outlines of the more distant were lost in shadow, and their glistening eyes alone could be seen. The passage which led to the air was completely crowded with women and children; and half a dozen curious faces were peering

down through the round hole in the roof.

The most of them had adorned themselves for the occasion. Plumes were floating from their scalp-locks; their heads and breasts were painted with vermilion, and long strings of wampum hung from their necks and mutilated ears. But at the present moment there appeared to be no thought of their appearance. Every sense was wrapped up in an intense interest in the approaching council; every breath was held; and every eye fixed with eagerness upon the face of the Commissioner, as he arose to address the meeting.

He stated simply and clearly the terms of the treaty. There was not a sound to interrupt his voice—not a limb stirred—not a muscle. Their chests seemed scarcely to move, so suppressed was their breathing; they were like statues; and their steady stare into the face of the speaker;

and the eagerness with which every eye turned to the interpreter, as he translated each sentence; showed their deep interest in the scene. At length the speaker concluded, and a loud groan, or grunt of approbation, followed from the throats of the whole meeting.

The old chief remained in grave deliberation for a few moments; then lighting his pipe, he drew a few puffs, and passed it to his neighbour, until it had completed the round of the whole assembly. He then rose and addressed the council. He spoke but a short time. The speech was intended as an answer to that of the commissioner, though it was addressed principally to his warriors. He spoke warmly of the liberality of the whites. He threw out hints as to the Contents of the heavy wagons which they had brought with them; and that the less difficulty they made in agreeing to the terms of the

treaty, the greater would be their share of the presents. He then dilated upon the advantage to be derived from a friendly intercourse with the whites; and wound up his whole address, with a most pathetic lamentation about the distance between their village and the buffalo hunting grounds. What this last portion of his speech had to do with the rest of the address, I could not well make out; but it appeared to be received with keen satisfaction by his audience; and when he resumed his seat he was greeted with a grunt of applause, which would have done credit to a sty of full-grown porkers.

After him, one of the warriors rose up to address the meeting. He was a lean, sinewy old man; his hair, which was unshaven, was now beginning to whiten with the frost of years, and hung in long tangled locks upon his shoulders. He rose slowly until he had attained his full height;

then, gathering his robe closely round his waist, he commenced his harangue. At first he spoke in a low, tremulous tone; his gestures were feeble but impressive; but at length he grew warmed with his subject, and his voice rose from its weak tones, until it sounded through the building with a startling clearness. His withered face lighted up; and his filmy eye seemed to kindle with a new lustre, as he proceeded. The whole dusky crowd listened in silence to his words; but they did not last long. The eloquent spirit, which for a few moments illumined him, passed away. Like the last, leaping flash of a dying flame, it was transient, and expired. For a moment the old warrior seemed endeavouring to recall his train of thought, but without success. Then with a melancholy shake of the head, he drew his blanket over him, and sank into his seat.

None rose after him. The pipe was

again passed round, and the terms of the treaty having been assented to, by the chiefs and principal warriors, the crowd poured from the lodge, and scattered through the town.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Distribution of Presents.

On the day following the council, the packages containing the presents for the tribe, were given to the chief, who prepared to divide them among the different members of his village. A large circle, composed of every man, woman and child, had collected in the prairie. In the centre of this, sat the chiefs, and five or six of the principal warriors. The packages were opened, and they commenced separating the different parcels for the purpose of distribution.

There was a great anxiety evinced by the crowd. Every eye was strained with an expression of strong hankering towards

the distributors; who quietly proceeded in the business of opening bundles of knives; boxes of kettles; tin cups; packages of beads; cloths; ribands, and other articles, without paying the slightest attention to the imploring, anxious looks of the restless bystanders. When this had been completed, the chief commenced cutting up the pieces of cloth, calico and ribands, and sending off the warriors to distribute them.

Until this moment there had been silence, but now arose a deafening clamour. The young squaws begged, the old crones scolded, screamed, and poured out torrents of abuse. The boys whooped, and the pappooses bawled. Never was there such a scene of confusion. When a warrior approached the edge of the circle, a dozen hands were reached out, to seize upon the article which he held. But those who had been appointed, had been carefully

selected for their coolness. For amid all the scrambling, they maintained the most philosophic calmness, and listened to the invectives of those who were disappointed with the most composed indifference. The distribution was managed with great impartiality; though we observed that a low word or an imploring look from some of the young girls, had their weight; and more than once changed the destination of a gaudy riband, or string of richly coloured beads. A loud outcry was always raised by the neighbours, on each of these occasions; and a few hard epithets were bestowed, by the old viragos, who thought they had lost, by this change of intention.

During the distribution, our attention was attracted by the manœuvres of one of the many antiquated squaws who crowded in the ring. She was a diminutive little being, clothed in a dirty flannel jacket, and a tattered piece of dress resembling a

petticoat. As for her years, they must have been countless. There must have been a strong flavour of bitterness about her tongue; for we observed that all the warriors seemed to shrink from collision with her. Although they evidently neglected her, still their neglect was of a more deferential nature than that exhibited towards the rest; and whenever they passed her, it was with a shuffling, apologetic air. There was no more active being in the assembly. She flew round in every direction; at one moment, she was at one part of the circle, and at another moment she was in the opposite. She scolded, screamed, and begged. She writhed with an eel-like slipperiness, through the crowd. Whenever one of the distributors passed across the circle to present some peculiarly tempting article, a terrible hustling and jostling would be observed at the point to which he appear-

ed to direct his steps, and before he could reach it, the convulsed face and straining eyes of the little squaw, would force a passage through the mass; and her shrill voice would be heard above the general clamour. She never obtained the prize, but the donor, after disappointing her, always moved off, with a hurried step; until he had placed as much space as possible between himself and her vigorous tongue. As the distribution proceeded, finding herself no better off than before it had commenced, she grew furious, and the clamour of her tongue was incessant. At last one of the distributors, an old dried up Indian, with one eye, marched up to her, and either from compassion, or for the purpose of hushing her abuse, reached out a small piece of red riband towards her. She snatched it eagerly; but after looking at it for a few seconds with an air of deep chagrin, her face began to swell

like a roasting pippin; and shaking the little fragment of a riband towards him, with an air of the greatest contempt, she opened a torrent of apparently bitter invective. This raised a loud shout of laughter, at the expense of the old man. He, however, did not wait to hear it, but walked off with a cool step, until he had got beyond the reach of her fire. At length another present was given her, but without effect. Her tongue was as inveterate as ever; and to get rid of her, she was finally presented with a large tin kettle, with which she marched off to the village, to the great relief of the whole assemblage. After her departure, the business went on with a degree of good humour, which had not previously existed.

During the distribution, we observed that those of the females who were troubled with large families of children, were particularly well provided for. They were

presented with those articles most suited to their domestic economy. To the young squaws, were given only trinkets and ribands, which were of small value in themselves, but possessed the strongest attractions for them. The knives and guns, were bestowed upon those of the young men who were most distinguished. The chiefs however were particular to lay aside one or two of the best of each article for their own private use.

In turning over the piles of blankets, a few small ones had been discovered. These were given to several of the wild-looking little fellows who were peering in through the ring. For a moment they seemed to doubt the reality of the gift; they appeared bewildered; then forcing a passage through the crowd, they raised a loud whoop, and started off for the town, at full speed; occasionally looking back, as if they feared a change might have

taken place in the intention of those who presented them, and that some one might be in pursuit to take away the prize.

After about an hour's chattering, laughing and scolding, the ceremony was finished, and the crowd dispersed—some with sour and sullen looks, some with an air of indifference—while the smiling, pleased countenances of others denoted they at least were fully satisfied with the portion allotted to them.

Most of the discontent was evinced by the old folks of both sexes. The men restrained themselves, and walked off with lowering brows. The women however gave full exercise to their tongues, and continued it, until the sound of their sharp, shrill voices was lost in the distance, as they travelled in Indian file towards the town. Notwithstanding the show of discontent, there were but few who had not obtained some trifle in the general distribution.

Shortly after this, we observed a troop of Indians coming up from the village. They were fantastically dressed, in buffalo skins, so as to bear a strong resemblance to that beast. They retained the head, beard, and legs of the animal entire; and were so well disguised, that several of them at a little distance, might have been mistaken for the brute itself. They had prepared themselves to give us the buffalo dance. They drew up in a large circle, at a little distance from a skin tent, which had been lent to us by them, our own marquee having become much tattered in a heavy gale a few nights previous. The leader of this band was the Big Kaw, who frisked behind the grave head and beard of an enormous buffalo bull. In the centre of the circle were seated a number of buffalos, whose business it was to sing, while the rest, consisting of chiefs, squaws, and pappooses, or in other words,

of bulls, cows, and calves, danced to their music. The chorus commenced with a low, mournful ditty, which set the whole herd of dancers in motion. They began moving slowly round the singers; but as the chant grew more and more animated, the vivacity of the herd increased. From a walk they quickened their pace to a trot; from a trot, it ambled off into a full gallop. Now the spirit of the beast, began to show out. The cows bellowed; the bulls frisked, roared, and fought; they kicked up; they tore up the ground, and chased each other round the circle. This lasted some time, until they grew uproarious, and the butting of horns was furious. At this sight the cows drew off; and several calves, after bursting out into a loud bawl, raised up from all fours, and mounting upon their two hind feet, started for the village—too much frightened to take any further share in the

day's diversions. The dance lasted for about two hours, after which, the Big Kaw, under the form of a seven-year-old bull, came and seated himself upon a billet of wood, at our sides. He appeared perfectly satisfied with his performance, but was grievously out of wind.

After this followed several other dances of a similar character. They received their appellations from different animals; and the merit of a dance consisted, in imitating as nearly as possible, the actions of the beast from which it received its name. They continued until late in the afternoon; when the Indians, one after another, departed to their homes; and long before nine o'clock, the busy hum was entirely stilled, and a deep silence hung over our tent, and the surrounding prairie.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Departure of Otoes for the Hunting Grounds.

Several days had elapsed, and the growing coldness of the weather, warned us that it was time for the expedition to be on its move towards the Pawnee villages.

The Otoes had consumed their supply of provisions, and were preparing to desert their town and start for the hunting grounds. The Iotan offered to accompany us, with about twenty of his principal warriors, that he might exert his influence with the Pawnees, to prevent any hostility towards us. Although chief of

a different and but a small tribe, still his influence with these wild hordes, was equal to that of any of their own leaders. His desperate courage had rendered him popular with the chiefs, and older warriors; and his sociable manners, though tinged with a dash of grimness, had rendered him a favourite with the less distinguished of the nation. In addition to this, the character of the Otoe tribe for furious courage, and pre-eminent skill with the rifle, gave great consequence to their chieftain.

It was for this reason that the proposition of the Iotan was gladly acceded to. And our preparations for departure, were forthwith commenced.

In the meantime, a change took place in the village. Every family was busily engaged in making ready for its departure, to the distant haunts of the buffalo. Large droves of horses, poured in

from every direction. The town rang with noises of all descriptions. Squaws were scolding; children were squalling; pappooses, too young to shift for themselves, like so many little mummies, were suspended in baskets, round the inside of the lodges, where they would be out of harm's way, while their mothers were engaged in packing up. The dogs had probably learned from disagreeable experience, that this was one of the ill-humoured seasons of the tribe. Many of them had withdrawn to a short distance in the prairie, where they sat, demurely waiting until the bustle should be finished, and good humour restored to the town. The warriors laid aside their usual indolence, and assisted their wives in loading the horses. The only idlers in the town, were children and old men. The first stood in droves, looking on, equally aware with the dogs, of the souring effect of all this bustle,

upon the tempers of the grown-up portion of the community; and equally cautious in avoiding all contact with them. The last strolled up and down; kicking every stray cur they chanced to meet, and bellowing out advice to all who chose to listen.

Here and there, a long train who had finished their labours, were slowly wending their way, over the western hills, towards the wished-for hunting grounds. A long suite of dogs, lounged after them, and disappeared with them, behind the distant ridges.

As one family after another dropped off, the town began to wear a lonely air. Wild and uncouth as were its inhabitants, we had formed a companionship with them. When, however, we entered their lodges, found the fires extinguished, the buildings stripped, and silence and solitude reigning, where we had been greet-

ed with kind looks and smiling faces, we experienced a dreary feeling, which increased our desire to be once more on the wing towards our still distant goal.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Departure from the Otoe Village.

It was about ten o'clock, on a rich golden morning, that we started from the Otoe village. The baggage wagons had left it some hours previous, and had long since passed the hills which rose behind the town. A crowd of gazers collected round us, as we saddled our horses. At length every thing was completed, and bidding farewell to the dusky group, we mounted, and galloped off in the direction taken by the wagons.

Our course lay along the borders of the Platte, which soon began to lose the luxuriant verdure, that had fringed its banks in the neighbourhood of the Otoe

town. Scarcely a tree or shrub grew upon its borders, or threw a shade upon the glare of its waters. It moved sullenly along, with now and then the floating trunk of some ponderous tree, drifting towards the still more murky waters of the Missouri.

Our party now counted about thirty, including Indians, and although, on account of the scarcity of provisions, four of the soldiers had been sent back to the garrison, still the reinforcement of Otoes, more than compensated for their loss. They were a noble race of men, with more pride of character, than we had observed in any of the Indians we had as yet met with. They had all prepared themselves for the journey. Their blankets were thrown over their shoulders and strapped round their waists, in such a manner as to leave a short skirt, extending halfway down to the knee. Their legs

were protected by coarse leggings of buffalo skin. Each man carried a short scabbard, containing a knife; and several pair of mocassins were strapped upon the back of each. They had left their rifles at the village; and a short thick bow, with a well stocked quiver of arrows, supplied their places. This was the usual equipment of an Indian warrior, when starting on a peaceful journey.

The leader of the band, was the Iotan chief. Next followed the short, thick figure of the Big Kaw, succeeded by the long form of the Thief; and after them came the inferior warriors. They moved in front of us, with limbs that seemed not to know fatigue; and although we travelled over many miles of prairie before nightfall, their pace was the same, and their step as unflagging as ever.

Take an Indian upon the prairies, and he is in his element. An air of wild

freedom breathes around him. His head droops not; his eye quails not; and not a single feature yields in submission to his fellow man. He is unrestrained in body; unfettered in spirit; and as wayward as the breeze, which sweeps over the grass of his own hills.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Alarm.

On the fifth night after our departure from the Otoe town, we encamped upon the banks of the Platte river. The night was clear and cool, and the reflected stars sparkled in the neighbouring river.

The prevailing silence was now and then broken by the neigh of our horses who were pasturing at a short distance; or by the trumpet-toned cry of some wild goose, the leader of a flock, on their way to the north. Far to the south, a faint red light was reflected in the heaven; which one of the hunters attributed to the burning of a prairie, some twenty miles off.

A large fire of heavy logs had been built in front of the tent; and the party had gradually gathered round it. Two or three of our dusky companions, mingled with the group—grave, but observing spectators of the actions of the whites. Half of a large deer was roasting before the fire; and the Black Bear, with a face of vast importance, was busily engaged in concocting our evening's supply of coffee, in a large tin bucket, which swung from a pole, inclined over the fire. The interpreter was called upon for a story, and had just discharged a large roll of tobacco from his mouth to make room for the full play of his tongue. "Ugh!" exclaimed one of the Indians.

"What's the matter now, *Hah-che-kah-sug-hah?*"* asked the doctor, addressing

* This Indian was one of the principal braves of the Otoe nation, and has since become a chief. The

the Indian by his native name. The Indian glanced his eye towards the speaker as he heard his name uttered; but after standing for a moment, he walked off a few steps, and placed his hand behind his ear, in the attitude of one engaged in earnest listening.

"What does he hear, D——?" said the doctor, turning to the Indian agent.

"We will know presently," returned the other quietly, without evincing more curiosity than the red companion with whom he had so long taken up his residence.

For a moment the Indian stood with his brows knit; his eyes bent to the ground;

name Hah-che-kah-sug-hah was given to him on account of his deadly success in the war parties against the Osages. It signifies, *the man who slays the Osages.* Though distinguished for ferocity in battle, yet in private life he was one of the most joyous, pleasant fellows I ever met with.

his head inclining a little forward; his nostrils expanded; and every sense, apparently on the *qui vive*. He remained so for a few seconds; then throwing himself upon the ground, pressed his ear closely against the sod.

"What do you hear, Hah-che-kah-sughah?" asked the agent, in the Otoe tongue.

"There are Indians on the prairie," was the answer.

This annunciation being interpreted, drew forth loud expressions of surprise from the whites; but the Indians were perfectly quiet; they asked no questions and made no remarks. They appeared to have the greatest reliance upon the Indian, whose keen hearing had been first attracted by the sound. They watched him earnestly, but calmly, as he lay upon the ground. After continuing in this position for some time, he slowly rose up, and placed his hand again behind his ear—the

very image of the most intense attention. Then taking up a pouch and rifle, belonging to one of the hunters, he stole off until he was lost in the gloom which hung over the prairie.

The contrast between the whites and Indians was now clearly observable. The former immediately commenced a conversation, teeming with suppositions, suggestions, and all that outpouring of confused ideas, usual, when a dozen persons altogether ignorant of a subject, attempt to throw a little light upon it, for the benefit of their neighbours. The Indians, on the contrary, remained perfectly cool; so much so, that one of them, quietly turned the attention of the cook, to a large piece of meat, which he was frying to a cinder, in his eagerness to listen to the comments of the party. They appeared to take the matter with as much quietness as if they had been in the heart

of their own town, instead of a large prairie, infested by bands of hostile tribes.

Nearly ten minutes had elapsed, when a loud, shrill cry arose in the prairie from two different quarters.

"Ugh! Otoe!" repeated several of the Indians, but without moving.

At that moment another long quavering whoop sounded in the air.

"Hah-che-kah-sug-hah!" ejaculated one of the Otoes.

A few moments elapsed, and two strange Otoes appeared in the camp, followed by the dusky form of our Indian friend.

In a few words they told their story. They had been to the Pawnee village, which was about ten miles off, and had left it that evening. About an hour previous they had been espied by a party of Sioux Indians; who had pursued them. Seeing a light, they fled for it. Their enemies followed, and they believed that even now,

they were lurking in the prairie, at but a short distance from the camp.

In an instant all was uproar. Some ran for their guns; some loaded; others filled their powder-horns; others swore at their comrades, on account of the loss of some article of equipment; but all were busily employed in suggesting to their neighbours what was best to be done in the present emergency, and all followed their own inclinations. "Raise the flag!" at last cried one, "and let them see that there are whites in the party, the fear of their rifles may keep them off."

This was no sooner proposed than executed. A tall pole with a striped flag floating from the end of it, was reared in front of the tent, in the full light of the fire.

The old Iotan saw the flag hoisted, and though he did not exactly understand

why it was done; still, he supposed that there was some meaning in it. So he followed the example of the whites, and erected a pole among a pile of kettles, marking his place of encampment. He then decorated the end with a striped flag, which he had hitherto used as a wrapper on state occasions.

"But Major," said one, looking rather wild, and walking up to the Indian Agent, "we are representatives of government—will the Sioux dare to fire on the United States?"

"If the people of the United States were *all* assembled, I presume they would not," was the quiet answer. "But you had better get back from the fire. The Otoes have done so already. They know that an Indian can pick a man off easier, if he stands in the light of the blaze than if he keeps in the shade. You had better

join them in the grass yonder,—there is no chance for running, for there's no place to run to."

This was satisfactory, and in another moment the questioner had followed the example of the savages.

The confusion lasted for a short time; but at length, each man had prepared himself. When this was completed, there was nothing more that could be done. There might be an enemy within a few yards, and they might be at the distance of many miles. The darkness was so great, that it was impossible to see more than ten yards beyond the fire. Our foes, on the other hand, if any there were, would be able to catch sight of our forms moving between them and the flame, at twenty times that distance. At length a young Indian rose up, and moving swiftly past the fire, threw himself on the ground beyond. For a moment he remained stationary; and

then raising his head, commenced worming his way through the long grass, until he was lost in the darkness. He returned after an absence of nearly half an hour. He had made a long circuit round the camp, but had discovered nothing. He had seen no signs of an enemy; and he gave it as his opinion, that they had abandoned the pursuit, and that no other human beings besides ourselves were in the neighbourhood. As he concluded, he took his seat at the fire, with the confident air of a person who felt that there was nothing to be apprehended from this exposure. He was soon followed by the rest, and in a short time the camp was as merry and noisy as if nothing had taken place to excite their fears.

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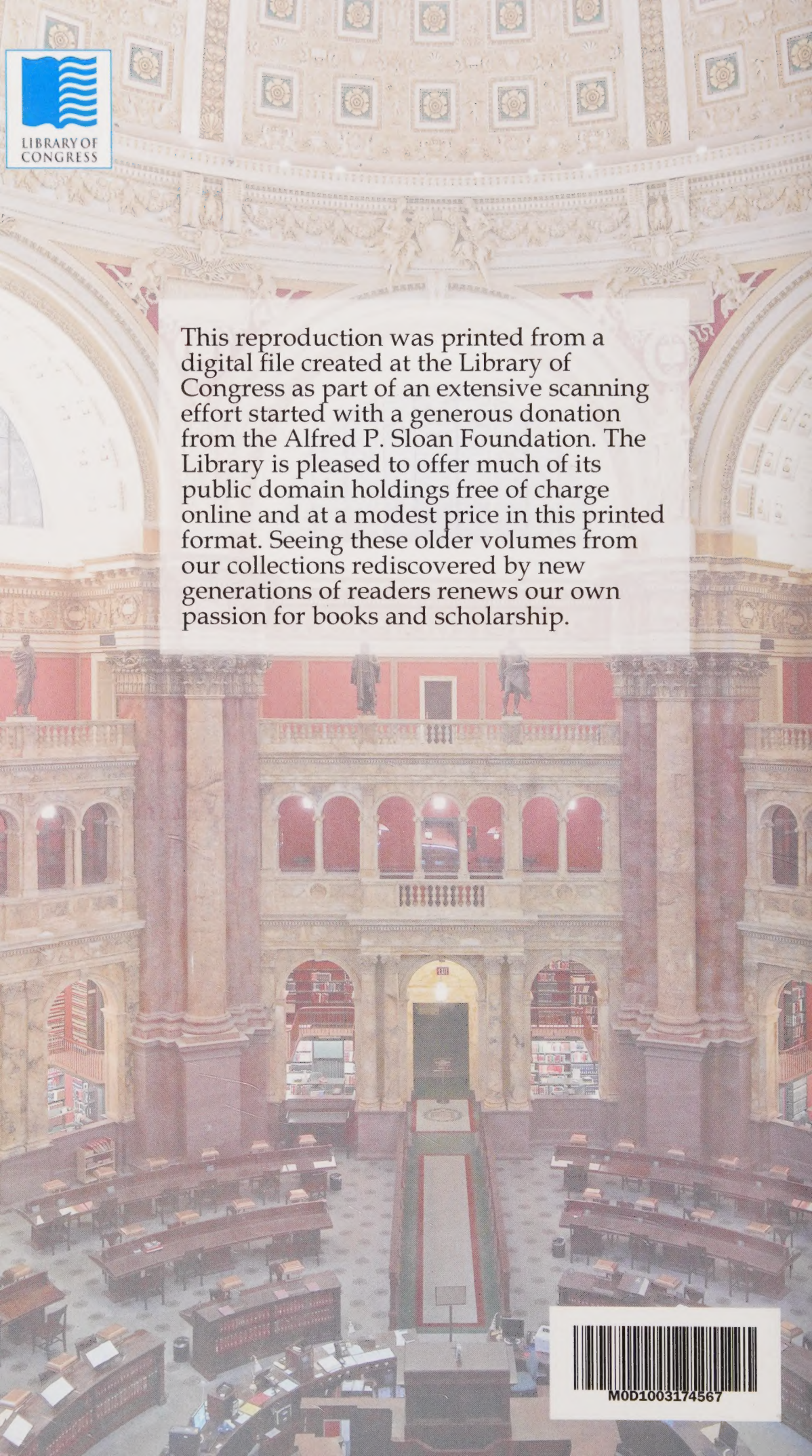

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